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Edited by
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MAY, 1923

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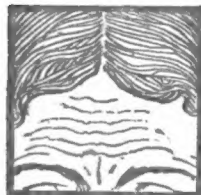
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Vol. LXXI

MAY, 1923

No. 1

The
SMART SET
The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines

AP
2
.S64
v.71
no.1



My Father

By Allan Ross Macdougall

MY father was a lusty man
Who sailed on every sea,
And could he rise to view me now,
What would he think of me?

I who have fire in both my feet
And gypsy blood in my veins,
But fear in my heart of the consequence
And a mind for all the pains.

I who sit chained to work all day,
Penning a string of words
And dare not follow my voyaging thoughts
That go like wide-winged birds

To all the lands he wandered in,
And over each magic sea—
What would he say if he returned,
That man who sired me?

The Coward

By Paul Eldridge

CHRISTIAN S. GORDON had taken the part of the betrayed husband in two dozen plays. In two dozen plays he killed either the villain, the shameless wife, himself, or all three. Therefore he came to the conclusion that jealousy was stupid, vulgar and brutal.

"Conceit and vanity worthy of antediluvian days! Let us be civilized! Let us act like ladies and gentlemen!" he said.

Thus, when Mrs. Gordon ran away with the young druggist who used to present her with the quintessences of the choicest perfumes, Christian S. Gordon said:

"I love my wife. Whenever she wishes to return to me I shall be glad to accept her without fuss or fury."

The thousands of people who had seen him act the outraged and enraged hero of two dozen plays were bitterly disappointed. "He is a coward! He is afraid of a little drug clerk!"

The authors of the two dozen plays were very indignant. "He is injuring our reputation as famous popular and psychologic authors."

The old cavaliers, who in their youth kept notebooks, alphabetically arranged, of the wives of friends they had seduced, shouted: "Christian S. Gordon has no sense of honor! He is a scoundrel!"

Ministers of the four gospels preached on the sanctity of the hearth, and pronounced anathema against those who do not defend it.

The newspapers spoke of the scourge of anarchism and the certain death of that nation in which husbands consider the abduction of their wives a trivial matter. . . .

Mrs. Gordon bought a tiny revolver, pretty as a toy, with which she shot her husband three times, exclaiming each time: "Coward! Coward! Coward!"

The jury found Mrs. C. S. Gordon innocent. "A woman has the right to defend her honor," was the verdict.



THERE is no harm in a girl playing upon a man's sympathies. The harm comes from her believing that she is a soloist.



WHEN a man is describing his beloved's charms, he feels like a poet and talks like an auctioneer.



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The Old Man

or

The Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse

(A Complete Novelette)

By Frank Pease

I

WHEN the great scandal of the Positive Life cult broke, sending delicious shivers of salacity quivering from coast to coast, and fairly grafting the crown of editorial laurels upon the Old Man's brow, one might have thought, from all that bustling secrecy around the *Globe*, nothing less than war, revolution or some equally imbecilic and futile social conflagration was at hand.

It came at a time "most opportune," as the Old Man admitted to the very few friends he allowed himself. Strikes, murders, divorces, kidnappings and burglaries, these were all very well, all in the day's work, but Positive Life was the Lead of Leads, the Story of Stories. It had, or was made to have, under the conjuring wands of their pens, all the spicy ingredients that the blazing inhibitions and corrupt cheek of the *Globe's* young men could pour into it.

They were not in the least hesitant. They went as far as they could, which was as far as they dared. Yet as far as they dared, not one of them was equal to the Old Man. He was masterly. *Masterly!* He was a genius, a wizard, a go-get-'em. That was all there was to it. He was worth every dollar of the "highest newspaper salary in the world." Why, he was worth—almost *anything*. . . . Well, y-e-s, it was a big figure he received now, but he was worth it, every cent of it. *Yes sir!* He was masterly; simply *masterly*;

Of that there was hardly a question, as testified by the big jump in *Globe* circulation; evidenced, too, when the owners phoned in, almost every day, their personal congratulations on some new angle, some new scoop, some particularly daring but quite, oh quite permissible, suggestiveness. It must have been permissible, masterly even, since no one, neither police, prosecutors, courts nor vice societies once thought of questioning. Instead, they religiously purchased every flaming issue, methodically followed every twist and turn of the story, thought of it, talked of it, all but whistled it, and quite possibly even dreamed of it. In the sprightly language of the *Globe* staff, they "ate it up!"

Those were great days at the *Globe*; great days, too, at every other newspaper office where the huge unwashed wooden spoons dipped and ladled and slopped about in an utter frenzy of feeding; but greatest days at the *Globe*. The *Globe*, rather, the Old Man, led them all. He was the richest, ripest, juiciest of them all. None of them could come up to the Old Man. Long since had the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth" exhausted its ever-narrow margin of "All the News That's Fit to Think." But the spicy-tainted, scarlet-hot gruel never ran thin, not once. For what the Old Man did not think, what his young men did not think, what together they did not set the public thinking, was—little enough; and Positive Life itself supplied the rest.

Unquestionably Positive Life was a

Big Story, the biggest story of the year. It had all the standard elements that go into big stories: heroes and heroines, outraged fathers, broken-hearted mothers, deceived fiancés, innocence betrayed, "ruin," regret, despair, a cheated public, the dark tones of mystery to bring out the sharp highlights of near-tragic sob-stuff, and a villain.

At least the *Globe* declared Positive Life held all these things.

But, before all, the sex-stuff. . . .

II

Nor one of the smartly dressed, punctiliously groomed, corrupt and bustling young men of the *Globe* staff, if directed to write something laudatory of their chief—a length-of-service commemoration or birthday notice—would have referred to him as the "Old Man." This was a dignified colloquialism entirely confined to the *Globe's* offices, consequently, as a public cognomen, neither desirable nor fitting. "Old Man" was intimate, endearing, traditional, a little sacred even, and its bruited abroad would have struck them as verging closely upon the profane.

They were never profane, these alert and corrupt young men, at least not in such matters. Each held a proper feeling for power, each possessed especially keen eyes for his own future. Yet even for scribes, they were inordinately subservient young men, "well trained" young men, "*Globe men*"; which is to say, as individuals, long since thoroughly smothered by the flaming opacity of that great newspaper: that huge wooden spoon for ladling a gullible public its daily gruel: for giving it, as the *Globe* prodigally boasted, "All the News That's Fit to Think."

Upon receipt of an order for lauding their chief, whatever residual impulses, desires or capacities for colorful figures these young men still retained would probably have burst forth in a gorgeous riot of scintillant symbols and unbridled hyperbole. Between

themselves, in the noisy privacy of the *Globe* offices, they might speak of him as "Old Man," but *write* of him as "Old Man"—never! That would have been too presumptuous, too incautious, a bit, so to speak, out of step, and they were seldom that.

On the contrary, they would surely have likened their chief to something lofty and distant, to some powerful, almost fabulous, perhaps dangerous creature like, let us say, an eagle, and his broad view of city affairs from the bird's-eye isolation of twenty-two stories, as that from an eagle's nest.

In itself "nest" would not be far fetched; indeed, up to a point, "nest" would be quite fitting. But whether one considered it an eagle's or a vulture's nest depended upon the nicety of his zoologic discrimination and his instinct for social stability, not to say, social preservation.

Eagles are said to strike for their prey, to risk something, vultures to gorge upon what is already fallen, tainted and corrupt. Vultures are also ill-repute with an *outré* characteristic, unique throughout the feathered kingdom, an obscene proclivity for fouling their own nest. Thus "nest" would not be an inappropriate or inadequate figure for the Old Man's office, providing it were not an eagle's but a vulture's nest.

For up there, suspended over the city with the menace of a Domesday Book, securely locked in a formidable array of steel files, accessible only to the Old Man himself, were the dark secrets and hidden *faux pas* of the entire metropolis. Ticketed, sorted and cross-indexed with absolute accuracy, here were recorded the débris of innumerable ruined reputations, the salacity of many exploited scandals and scandals yet to be exploited, the sorry tales of countless ominous mishaps, senseless disasters, shameless and needless exposures: the picked bones and decayed scraps of every maimed frivolity and squalid despair in the human agony; litter, refuse and offal of the nest.

Shifting the figure slightly, here was not a skeleton in the closet, but a huge charnal house, a whole mausoleum, a vast catacomb of skeletons. Skeletons were the Old Man's specialty, as they were also the source of his power. Skeletons were what made him the "Highest Paid Editor in the World." For that instant and sweeping knowledge, that damning and damnable data which could issue from those steel files, and which he knew as he knew his own mind, which *was* his own mind, the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth" paid him his surpassing price.

With their naïve adoration for huge salaries, and in earnest recognition of superlative power, the latter shared in minor though grateful degree by his alert and corrupt young men, the Old Man was tendered a homage little short of idolatrous. They aspired to be like him.

Among wielders of wooden spoons the Old Man had what was known as a "*wonderful* nose for news." With it he could smell a "story," "spot a lead" or create a "scoop" out of the most insignificant items. From some oddly worded ad, a chance remark or passing reference, the quite accidental or casual association of prominent or notorious persons, he drew inferences that, to the uninitiated who know nothing of his steel files, seemed almost clairvoyant, and which a very few pronounced diabolical. Through it he could fathom the closest secrets, and with correct gestures of righteous sincerity block a business deal, stigmatise a community development, create a race-riot, defeat a political candidate, crucify an official on a cross of words, or cast a woman into outer darkness.

It was uncanny, his news sense, and impressed his staff of young men as did nothing else about him, not even that unrivaled salary, "highest in the world." It was penetrating, it was blasé, it was implacable. It boded trouble for mankind and womankind. It was throned upon trouble. It sat at the heart of the city seeing all, hearing all, sensing all. It was forever

sniffing and spying and guessing, searching for the weak spot, the ulterior—or what it never failed to assume was the ulterior—in men's loves, aspirations or humiliations, and sometimes their real grandeur.

Completely, irrevocably reprehensible, it was the indelible Mark of Cain upon the city's brow: the *procès verbal* of the city's uneasy conscience recorded so accurately and locked so securely in those steel files. Yet for all that, it sat there honorably, disdainfully judging all things, condemning most things, belittling the rest. Possessing a passionate flair for flaws, daily it gorged itself upon a never-ending exposure of the city's privacies and frailties, revelling shamelessly in its sombre heartbreaks, its stumbling futilities, its shallow nonsense. Nothing escaped it. The Past could not hide from it. The Present was sold to it. The Future not safe from it. For this was Scandal, the Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse. War, Famine, Pestilence,—all these succumb to Death, but Death itself makes way for the Fifth Horseman.

III

HAVING trained them himself, the Old Man was extremely but guardedly proud of his staff. They were his nerve impulses threading the highways and byways of scurrility: his flying shuttles of squalid rumor, wild report, credulous assumption. They were his bloodhounds, his falcons, his carrier pigeons, the sensitive and sensational tentacles of his farspread octopus-grasp of the city's news.

They were the city's unofficial Peeping Toms who swarmed through the night tilting the lids of houses to spy upon the naked souls of the dwellers and catch them in self-forgetting postures of mirth or agony. None knew better than they how to insinuate a foot into some timidly opened doorway, to palm off a fire-badge as a symbol of invasive authority, or to sneak a photograph when backs were turned in some trouble-broken household. But unlike

that ungallant spy of Coventry, social retribution did not touch these young men. On the contrary, they were honored for their impudence, honore and—*paid!*

They were any number of things, figurative or actual. Mostly they resembled spiders, malicious black-coated little spiders that ran up and down, over and under and across the Old Man's tangled web of fact or fancy, gleaning at its residential peripheries the odds and ends of whispered gossip, callous conjecture, libelous imputation, and like spiders scurrying back to the denser press of downtown sections for confirmations at the Central Police Station, at the City Hall, in courtrooms, cabarets, business offices, theatrical haunts, in hospitals, at the Morgue, in clubs, poolrooms and political rendezvous. They were at home everywhere.

When they could not wheedle, bribe or browbeat "facts" from others, they could, like industrious spiders, "spin" for themselves. And spin they did. They were always spinning and weaving briskly, stretching the lines of their web far out, doubling back, crossing over, gathering in, fastening innumerable dubious intersections with a question or a hint, fabricating a webbed similitude of truth quite sufficient apparently for readers who were never doubting or analytical. Like indefatigable spiders, they could also spin their web to an extreme, an almost invisible tenuity, yet always wind back to its center, back to the "story," back to the Old Man.

Implication, inuendo, veiled surmise, the fatally suspended interrogation, more pitiless often than any truth,—the Old Man had taught them how to use these perverse and cowardly weapons of modernity with a finesse that always just escaped courts of law, yet equaled in ultimate deadliness the poisoned daggers and sharp rapiers of Italian *bravos* at the best period of the Renaissance.

Indeed, far deadlier their pens than the swords of assassins. Unlike those sanguinary Latins of the Renaissance

who wounded or slew only the body, these corrupt young men struck at the soul, and reached it too. If they did not kill, cripple or suppress at the first stroke, then there were more strokes, later, at some forgetful, some unguarded moment. For there were always the steel files.

Hybrid spawn of the metropolis, a sort of perverted cross between low informers and city detectives, with all the Judas gifts of the first and none of the courage of the last, it was amazing, really, considering how vast the damage perpetrated, and they were allowed in the streets. Surely, there must one day arise a figure of heroic mettle and Homeric mirth, some tried business man of tradition, who should win his country's everlasting gratitude by bundling and booting them—twenty-two stories if possible—pell-mell into the street. But that day and that man were yet afar off, for it is well known America is still a young country, though full of promise.

One had to consider, too, that noisy shibboleth for minding other people's business, the "freedom of the press." For the press, exceeding fearful of censorship, is forever falling back upon its hallowed slogan, a never-failing defense, "the public's right to know." Like its competitive mental comfort station, the motion picture, the press is also rendezvous where moderns of all classes meet in common *carrousel* of sterile and vicarious equality which is far too intriguing and satisfactory for a populace too corrupt, too indifferent, too ignorant or too cowardly to strike back. Likewise is the press modernity's equivalent for mob-seducing. Corn Laws, for the armed chariot races and gladiatorial games of ancient arenas. Through the press resound the same old cries of victors and vanquished. *Hoc habet!* The shrieks of victims, the gore of the slain, the stench of burnt offerings still mingles there in a delirious frenzy of sight, sound and sense. *Via victis!* More than passing significance lies in the fact that providers of ancient games were called

editors. For he who rules the press is Caligula and Nero, Heliogabalus and Diocletian, but his Triumphs are only the blue serge lockstep of sobocracy in place of the purpled parades of the Cæsars.

Once upon a time, too, there was a jungle, a place of danger and death, of creeping and crawling, of ambushade and treachery and blood. Old saber-tooth strode round the waterhole lashing his tail in fury. Reverberations of his great voice rolled fearfully up cliffs from whose high-held safety two-legged creatures pelted him with stones and bombarded him with huge rocks. Sometimes, when they were many, the two-legs crept down and battled that terror of the jungle with sharp sticks and burning brands. And sometimes, peering through sleep-robbd eyes and matted locks, frenzied with delight at all that blood-spilling and skull-crushing encircused below, the chattering females above would so far forget themselves as to fling down missiles upon both combatants. Today their descendants, in all stages of *déshabille*, lean from the cliffed windows of apartments to peer into canyons fearful as any tiger-menaced waterhole, and shout: "Hey, boy! Gotta *Globe*?"

That ancient jungle, old saber-tooth himself, are still here. The dangers, the creeping and crawling, the ambushades, the treacheries and the blood—all here. Has not Olympian Conrad declared that life under all its forms is a dangerous affair? Today old saber-tooth's roar has become the boiler-throated bellowing of "extras." Eye-crashing headlines, curdling details, fearsome predictions, end-of-the-universe congeries, bone-breaking, skull-crushing, flesh-rending, blood, blood, blood, all here; all served up nicely, delivered promptly each morning at front doors, and all for three pence. Ah, the boons, the inestimable "service" of civilization—a saber-tooth for every breakfast: a moiety of blood and fear and disaster meticulously set down by alert and corrupt young men for tooth-

less old ladies to snuffle beside the fire, for *hausfrauen* to shrill down dumb-waiters, and for children to miss the schoolbell. *Masterly!* . . . But watch out the tawny eye of its malice does not light on *you*, for unlike the older saber tooth who, having slain, strode mightily away, the modern beast never leaves; instead it keeps steel files.

Thus in all the city there were none to say them nay. But even had there been, these cunning and unscrupulous young men would have found a way out. The Old Man had imbued them with much of his own insatiable predacity, a predacity born, not of his courage or his years, but of his cynicism and his steel files. The thugs of the Renaissance hazarded something, if no more than their romantic unworthy lives. These young men risked nothing, not even their reputations, since each was most carefully shielded by the circumspect wooden armor of anonymity; and, once more, the Old Man's steel files.

Like his alert and corrupt young men, the Old Man prided himself on being under no illusions about the public. Drawn together, even as cut-throats, blackguards and all other enemies of society are drawn together in conspirative affinity for whatever is compromising, cruel and obscure, they affected toward the public that vicious and patronizing contempt traditional between jailers, keepers of the insane, and all who maltreat the weak, the aged and the dependent. They considered the public morons.

Indeed, it was sometimes difficult for them to tone down their self-revealing scorn; but, before all other things, they were "*Globe* men." Seldom, if ever, did the public get a glimpse behind that cold gray mask of "The Greatest Newspaper on Earth" to note what was really thought of it. That was not what the public was for. The public was a providential device for yielding stories. Whenever it stirred its great limbs in desire or wrath, most frequently only to wound itself in the might of its misunderstanding, but thus yielding stories,

then it was a good, a beneficent, a kindly beast. When it did not, it was contemptible, a crowd of morons.

A simple and childlike affair, the public; so easily aroused, so easily calmed, so easily fed. . . .

IV

FOR all his disquieting power, his "*wonderful* nose for news" and his peerless salary—"highest in the world," there was nothing actually old about the Old Man; nothing, that is, except two important items: his malice and his looks.

Horn-bowed spectacles lent to his sharp gray face that monstrous expression, at once so aged and so startling, of foetal precocity. This macabre effect was heightened by a lofty and pallid brow whose polished gleaming surface was so tightly drawn as to seem, beneath the hard brilliance of a shaded lamp, pasted on. His considerable baldness, augmenting the natural bulge of his exalted brow, intensified the frown of eyes that were red-rimmed and narrow, stone-blue and piercing. Highest spot of light in the semi-darkened room, his bald skull, rolling and turning incessantly as he addressed a battery of telephones parked on the desk like straggling recruits, resembled some huge glistening egg grasped by an invisible hand which had thrust it into that pool of light for disinfection or for scrutiny.

A striking affair, this head; a proper head for the "Highest Paid Editor in the World"; just the head he would be supposed to have; its massive proportions the sort which, through some atavism of superstitious deference, constrain mankind, whenever confronted by the preternatural gravity of things hydrocephalic, to hesitate just short of laughter.

He was also undersized, as are so many who wield great power in an age when power has slipped the grasp of kings, priests and warriors. Equally symbolical, too, was his very modest dress; as though common vanities were

not for him; as though he who embodied so much exaggeration, panic and deceit found it expedient to slip past his fellow men with an inconspicuousness deceptive as it was conscious.

His young men dressed, if not loudly, at least with a smartness befitting representatives of the "Highest Paid Editor in the World." This was as it should be since, beyond containing "All the News That's Fit to Think," the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth" also carried, amidst other equally specious misinformation, the greatest amount of sartorial advertising, and its staff of smartly dressed young men were seldom out of step. Their smartness was sufficient excuse for the Old Man's contrasting unpretentiousness. Surrounded, served and flattered by such superficially sophisticated young men as their meticulous appearance indicated, the Old Man required something distinct; something that would quite set him off from and, of course, above them. For he was only thirty: another urgent reason for contrast. He had fallen upon modesty rather naturally, as it would be difficult to discover around the *Globe* offices anything more distinctive than a genuine or assumed restraint.

V

THE hero of the Positive Life scandal wasn't so much of a hero, but at least he could be played up that way because he was the father of one of the girls. It was really quite fortunate his being there at all, as the youngest, the "wronged" girl's fiancé, had been frightened off by the first shrill blast of the *Globe's* great siren, and no one now knew where this young gentleman was. That "poor, wronged, stubborn girl" wouldn't tell, if indeed, she knew, which was extremely doubtful. The *Globe's* fierce saber-toothed roar was a soul-affrighting sound, this timid young man not the first it had sent into hasty hiding.

The heroines, there were several, or there could have been several, if they had only played up to the Old Man's

first angle on the story, had only stayed put; but they hadn't, and now must take the consequences of such fatal discretion. It was not for nothing the Old Man was masterly, a wizard, a genius, a go-get-'em, highest paid wielder of wooden spoons in the world. He knew when a story was a story, and what. He knew when a girl, or any number of girls, could be played up as square, honest, virtuous, innocent girls, pride of their mother's heart, apple of their father's eye, joy of their friends, and some young man's plundered bride-to-be.

But there was something the matter with these Positive Life girls right off the start. They didn't run true to form; they simply would not play up to the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth" nor to any other newspaper either. They didn't run true to form in that they seemed not the least interested or even alarmed at *what* the papers said! Every wooden spoon in the city admitted—between themselves—that this was ab-so-lute-ly unparalleled. These Positive Life girls refused to "desert the Cause," though why, no one, least of all the Old Man, knew, unless, perhaps, because it was a cause.

Even so, it was an evil cause. The Old Man said so, for that was the angle of the story. He didn't know, really, that Positive Life was in itself an evil cause, or any more evil than a half dozen he could name; but this was the way he had decided to play it up. Thus he said Positive Life was evil, and the public, opening wide its great soft mouth at every splash of his huge wooden spoon, swallowed whatever he said. So he continued to say this in all the known ways there were to say it, which were many, and he knew them all.

And *wasn't* the man a villain, a low scoundrel, a rogue? Hadn't he

Weren't the girls "ruined," "down," "lost"—at least since he found they wouldn't play up to the story, or to *his* angle?

Well, they'd have to take their medicine! But, either way, there would be

no loss. There was no loss, not an iota, not in Positive Life. Everything counted. Everything went. *Everything!* Really, it did beat the Dutch what you could get away with in Positive Life! You could get away with *anything!* If not one thing, then another. If the girls wouldn't, simply *wouldn't* fit into the mould prescribed by custom and sanctioned by the *Globe* for rescued or near-rescued heroines, innocence regained, then they could just as easily be damned for ruined or near-ruined heroines, innocence lost.

It didn't make any difference, really, not the slightest; simply changed the angle a little; made the villain blacker, more villainous, more intriguing; and put the girls entirely out of the running in whatever good effect their frank testimony might otherwise have had upon that great embalmer of good effects, the public. Words were cheap, cheapest thing in the world around the *Globe*. You merely talked it over with your re-write men. You killed the "apple-cheeked purity," "blushed with innocent offense," "wide-eyed naïveté" stuff about the girls, substituting "scarlet shamelessness," "brazen defiance of public censure," "corrupt sophistication in those so regrettably young," etc., etc. Words were cheap, cheapest and easiest of all the things that went into making the news fit to think.

After he found the girls *wouldn't* desert Positive Life, the Old Man also changed orders to his photographic staff, the *Globe's* renowned "Art Department." As the Story of Stories progressed from salacity to salacity, arrested or suspected members of Positive Life scarce recognized themselves when appearing in the *Globe's* 10 P. M. "Morning Edition—Special Positive Life Features—New and Latest Photographs Taken by Our Own Staff."

From rather ordinary but nice looking girls, day by day the near-rescued or near-ruined heroines of Positive Life fell rapidly in *Globe* photography to creatures little short of indecent. The villain, a rather heavy-set, slightly gray-haired, entirely unromantic figure, who

might have been a coal dealer, a small broker, real estate agent or your corner grocer, underwent every metamorphosis known to the ingenious "artists" of the *Globe's* photographic staff.

That was old stuff, and, dead easy. You simply knocked out the white collar with a dash of charcoal, substituted an open shirt, added a two-days'-growth-of-beard effect, threw a few heavy lines under the eyes and around the mouth, gave the face a final threatening ferocity by thickening the brows, slipped in a new plate, reduced, focused, pressed the button, and there you were—as good a villain as any snuffing old lady, shrilling *hausfrau* or pop-eyed child could expect for the trifling cost of three pence.

Yes, Positive Life was a *bear* of a story! . . . You could get away with anything, *anything*!

VI

It had all come about, as do so many "big stories," almost accidentally, which fact no one knew better than the Old Man, only, you never mentioned that part of it: "Not in newspaper work, son." Entering the Prosecuting Attorney's office, one of the *Globe's* young men found that official and a deputy "convulsed with laughter." Inquiry led to the information that there was in the city jail one who proclaimed himself discoverer of something he called "Positive Life;" and Positive Life was . . . Well, anyhow, it was *some* story, or might turn out to be, especially that part about the girls.

The young man from the *Globe* had merely dropped in to pay a small poker debt. He never expected a story, nor, except for the girl part of it, did the Prosecutor see very much in it. A simple police court case. There were lots of them on the dockets everywhere—only this one was a scream, the way that Positive Life fellow passed them around, or was said to. The Prosecuting Attorney hadn't given the *Globe* the highball as he hardly thought it was worth it. And anyhow it was time to

go home. But here was the story.

Positive Life—according to its discoverer—was the *real* life. Positive Life was the absolute, the genuine, the unadulterated thing-in-itself upon which both seen and unseen were founded. What had puzzled sons of Adam since Eden was kindergarten to the world would hereafter be sunlit clear. The Riddle of the Universe, for those who still desired its unriddling, was about to be solved. This was all embodied in a book; not an ordinary book by any means, but a different, a unique, a remarkable, an inspired, a *really* sacred book. The name of this book was the "Book of Life."

He, the discoverer of Positive Life, had written, rather, "inspired it into being" himself; or, to look into the matter slightly, Positive Life, "manifesting" itself through him, had caused it to be written; going so far, indeed, as to guide his very hand; a not so legible hand, to be sure, but one which, with his personal supervision and the loving help of his "collaborators," the several young women which slowly but surely growing Positive Life was attracting to itself and to him as Manifestor, the printer had finally deciphered and set up.

This monumental work was now printed, bound and ready for distribution to a long-suffering expectant humanity. It contained, besides a frontispiece picture of Manifestor, exactly 444 pages of printed matter including the index, but no references, as Positive Life knew nothing of references, being instead an "emanation from Primal Sources." Henceforth, the Eternal Mystery was to be as an open book, and that book his famous, or about-to-be-famous, "Book of Life, With Special Introduction to Revelations; cloth bound \$5.00 per copy; leather bound \$10.00; copies specially autographed (to order) by 'Inspirationist Himself,' \$15.00 (for a limited period only.)" Additional notice stated that should a purchaser feel impelled to send more than the highest figure named above, he could, and really should, do so at once,

as this was an infallible "sign" of the efficacy of Positive Life. Under no circumstances would moneys be refunded, though special cases might obligate the forwarding of an additional "Key" or "Plan of Reading," as, above all other things, Manifestor was anxious for the Positive Truths of Positive Life to be plain to everyone.

There was nothing particularly startling in all this, not to the young man from the *Globe*. He was a wise newspaper man, than whom none were wiser to the ways of fakes and fakers, of whom he always assumed the city to be largely composed. Doubtless he would have left it on a pun or a wise bit of slang, called it "blown-in-the-glass life," or something equally penetrating, except for the Prosecutor's further statement that in this *real* life, this genuine, absolute or Positive Life, such things as social, especially marital matters, mattered not at all. It seemed, according to announcements of the discoverer, in Positive Life's "conditions," "states," "degrees" or "planes of sophisticated purity," all men were brothers and all women sisters; from which it obviously followed that all were and should be sisters and brothers to all. In Positive Life, consequent upon this sweeping dissolution of those abstract standards by which the profaner world is operated, there need be neither courtship nor giving in marriage. In fact, marriage was not at all necessary. That hampering institution within which "material-minded" men and women consorted, bred children, brought them up, held properties and one another together, having, in the light of Positive Life's Revealed Truths, outlived its desirability, was now and henceforth to be done away with, laid aside, discarded, *spurlous ver sunnken*. What was left was not marriage, but a sweet commingling in loving-kindness and Positive Friendship. It was very simple: you merely announced your choice, and proceeded thereon. . . .

As the story was told to the young man from the *Globe*, there was also

claimed for Positive Life by its discoverer, the rare quality of *self*-manifestation. That is to say, once embraced, Positive Life possessed inherent capacities, indeed, almost unavoidable accuracies of discreet assistance, as shown by its having already manifested to the extent of assembling under the same roof one brother, the Manifestor himself, and several sisters, some of whom it was said were still too young to have attained the high latitudes of Positive's Life sophisticated purity. How many the Prosecutor did not know. The case had just come in. Some female neighbor, zealous in the cause of correct morals or preservation of house-rents, which were one and the same thing in her neighborhood, had complained of "strange goings on in that house," etc. The Prosecutor was "investigating." They had arrested Inspirationist Himself and a few of the girls. They couldn't get anything out of them, but were holding them under an "open charge," thus justifying the contention somewhere made that even the Law also hath its humor.

As the Prosecutor was just leaving for the night, nothing would be done until tomorrow. Probably wasn't much of a story . . . though that dope about the girls might be played up a little. No one else would be likely to run into the Prosecutor that night; the police knew nothing of why they were held, except that the Prosecutor had ordered it, so this much was exclusive *Globe* news anyhow. The young man guessed he'd run down to the Central Station and look over the Blotter—so's to be sure. You could never tell! Hardly a good local story in sight so far as he could see. Promised to be a dull night. He'd drop this little tale on his way past the *Globe*. . . Couldn't make much of it. . . . Still, those girls. . . . That sex stuff. . . . Funny, how girls got religion struck! . . . He wondered if they were pretty girls. . . . Make it more interesting. . . . He wondered if, say a fellow horned in there, he couldn't. . . . Yes, kinda dull night. . . .

VII

BUT the Old Man didn't think it was going to be a dull night, not with anything like Positive Life on the hook. He had a standing order for all sex-stuff to be sent up to him the moment it came in, and had pneumatic tubes installed for that very purpose. He fell upon those scattered notes the young man had thrown into a casual ineffective story as starving men fall upon food and drink. His "*wonderful* nose for news" quivered in anticipation. He smelled a *big* story. He had a flair for such things. He had never missed a big story since becoming "Highest Paid Editor in the World." That was what he got paid for. If there wasn't a big story there, why, damit, he'd *make* one!

He began barking at the desk phones in a shrill nervous staccato. He sent the staff photographers scurrying across the city in taxis. He assembled men from every corner, routing them out from lecture halls, saloons, banquets, quiet poker games and noisy political meetings. With cubs assigned to what would ordinarily be leading local stories, the regulars were despatched to "cover every inch" of Positive Life. Decidedly it was not going to be a dull night, not where "All the News That's Fit to Think" was sorted.

Long before Deadline the story began to come in. It came in spurts, fragments, dislocated hints, sweeping assumptions, and wild misstatements. It arrived by telephone, by special delivery, by special messengers, and in the notebooks of the regulars. It was gone over as with a fine tooth comb for "points," its disjointed parts put together with utmost despatch though scarce greater accuracy than small children display in assembling puzzles. No matter—this was only the first blast! Plenty of time to smooth up the rough places—later.

The Old Man was *wonderful*!

Woof! Woof! Woof! Bark! Bark! Bark! Yip-yip-yip!

"Play *this* up!" "Get *her* on this!" "When did *he* . . ." "Were's that *youngest* one's picture?" "How *old* did

you say she was?" "What'd you say his *wife* said?"

They were off! The hounds were in full cry! The Old Man, Master of the Pack, was—masterly; *masterly*!

The *Globe's* 10 o'clock edition set fire to the streets with these flaming headlines:

VICE CULT UNEARTHED IN HEART
OF CITY
ORIENTAL HAREM DISCOVERED ON
NORTH SIDE
POLICE RAID HOUSE OF SECRET
SINS
ARREST LEADER
PROMINENT MEN AND WOMEN SAID
TO BE INVOLVED

Positive Life had *arrived*!

For months the city, the countryside, the nation itself was to be intrigued captivated, held breathless by the astounding allure of Positive Life. Positive Life was to stampede the country districts and send them reeling from righteous outrage to befuddled wonderment that such things could be in the Republic and a just God not strike. On elevated trains, in street cars, buses and the privacy of their own motors, metropolitan readers crowded the scarlet trail of Positive Life as it ran through the worn drop scenes and painted forests of the *Globe* with a pointed and relishing interest that all but licked its chops.

Positive Life was not only a *big* story, it was the story of the year. All the wooden spoons said this. The Old Man said so himself. The corrupt young men said it was "hot stuff." The public said . . .

* * *

The Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse rides hard when he rides.

VIII

IN those dramatic days when the Old Man pursued the Lead of Leads into the Story of Stories, there were in America three great Meccas for those whose faith had weakened as a result of the 19th Century's "Warfare of Science and Religion." Boston, the orig-

inal, the Mother-Mecca, was one; Los Angeles another; and the city of the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth" a third. The number of devotees of the "New Thought" which had taken the place of the old faith, and for which these cities were Meccas, was amazing: so amazing, indeed, as to strain near to breaking the soberest man's instinct against credulity. Nowhere did their numbers, the variety and vehemence of their preachments, surpass those of the city where the Old Man, peering out from his twenty-two stories for news, leaned over the metropolis like a leer-ing gargoyle of Notre Dame, the looming shadow of the Fifth Horseman.

If it were at all permissible to think of the Old Man's office as a vulture's nest, it were equally correct to think of another center of organized confusion not far away as a Tower of Babel. Sliced through with a giant knife, this tower would have exposed a score of floors, each divided by a number of small halls, and each sheltering a small flock from all the cults known to America. It was here on any night in the week, but especially during Sundays, that these cults preached and prayed, wrangled, propagandized, manifested, experienced inspiration, held the thought or went into the silence. Often it was a rather nasal silence, since many of the silence-holders were prone to infirmities of nose, throat or lungs, as people sometimes are who have set their hearts upon the Nowhere, the Not Yet, or the Never, thus suggesting a possible phthisical genesis of Northern morals.

Veritably a Tower of Babel, yet one could, without greatly stretching the point, also describe it as America's Leaning Tower, so patent the obliquity of its innumerable devotees. There were cults for men, for women, for young girls and for children generally. One might practice here all the known cal-esthenics of mysticism, and some not generally known. Here were salvation-ists of deep-breathing, sun-bathing, meat-abstaining, crystal-gazing, jewel-reading, ball-of-the-foot-rising and

counting, and some for whom the Kingdom of Heaven could be approached only through a refined diet of raw peanuts, cracked corn, crumbled bran or whole wheat.

A great rendezvous for antis, it made little difference, apparently, what one was against so long as he was against something, made his protest vocal and public, or, what served just as well, purchased one or more of the innumerable books and pamphlets confirming the invincibility of his convictions that all was not well with a world so imperfectly ordered as to contain both himself and the object of his antipathy. If he were an anti, other antis made him welcome. Since, no matter how mildly, he was against something, obviously he was not "bourgeois"; there was hope for him.

There were antis for most of the things that afflict, amuse or interest mankind, and, rather frequently, antis who were anti to all other antis, suggesting, these last, that itinerantly amorous philosopher, Posocharis, of Anatole's France's *White Stone*.

There were anti-vaccination, anti-dog-muzzling, anti-cat-keeping, anti-feather-wearing, anti-cigarette-smoking, anti-saloon, anti-voting, anti-tax-paying, anti-Catholicism, anti-war, anti-vivisection, a host of antis-in-general to the world, the flesh and the devil as represented by everything of later origin than the first three centuries of the Christian Era; and, finally, a goodly array of anti-capitalisms.

Had Positive Life members been describing their cult, beyond a doubt they would have pronounced "*The Life*" a sacred affair: a haven and refuge set like an oasis amidst the city's materialistic desert of sin. What Positive Life sought was attainment of pure spirit—"the same as the *real* Masters." Things were nothing. Spirit was all. Things killed. Spirit gave life, Positive Life. It was what you were "in spirit" that counted. *The Life*, once you had come into it, would take care of all the rest—your outside affairs: house-rents, sustenance, clothing, current expenses,

and such other multifarious costs as men levy upon one another for passing through a material world.

To be sure, for the present at least, one *had* to charge—something—for “manifesting” Positive Life to others. That was a primary flaw in the existing material world, one of the things Positive Truth would do away with. But one did not *call* it charging. There was no such thing as *charging* in Positive Life. Positive Life knew nothing of buying and selling, bargaining, rendering bills or collecting *pay*. Positive Life was *above*, far above, all *that*. It was very simple. You merely left in some conspicuous spot, say, on a table, the edge of a mantle, a corner of Manifestor’s desk—some place certain not to be overlooked—a fee, the size of which depended upon the degree of your advancement into the “conditions,” “states” or “planes” of Positive Understanding, and, of course, the amount of your income. If the latter were not “abundant,” this was because up to date you had followed the practices of a world unfortunate enough not to have experienced the Revealed Truths of Positive Life. However, Manifestor was very liberal in such matters. He set no Mosaic restrictions upon donations. You did not *have* to limit yourself to a tithe. You could, if the spirit so moved, give the remaining nine-tenths to the Cause. And your leaving your fee or “manifestation” yourself, unsolicited, was a *Sign*.

There was no problem about all this, none whatever. The entire world, all history, the rise and fall of peoples, civilizations, cultures, states, theogonies, the panoramic pageant of the past had simply struggled along the best it could until the coming of Positive Life to light *The Way* to a burdenless future. Once you had come into Positive Understanding, all of life’s ordinary problems—and all problems were ordinary in Positive Life—would be taken care of by these powerful and *mysterious* forces at last under the personal control of Inspirationist Himself. No worries, no troubles, no distress of any sort was *possible*,

once Positive Life entered and took charge of souls hitherto stubborn, sinful or material-minded.

It was all very plain, as plain as plain, so plain, so simple, so obviously and incontrovertibly *true* that, really, Inspirationist Himself was sometimes at a loss to find terms sufficiently simple to express—well, simplicity, Positive Simplicity. In fact language was more often a barrier than a help. Mere words got in the way. Concepts, ideas, figments and fancies so ran over into “states,” “conditions” and “planes,” so ravelled away into beatific intuitions—there were many intuitions in Positive Life—that its members were likewise frequently in doubt where one began and the other left off. But this did not matter, not really; because, once you were in, really *in* Positive Life, you *couldn’t* go wrong. There was no “wrong,” not *really*, not in Positive Life. “Wrong,” as the material-minded world conceived it, was simply a disease of the imagination; a blot upon an otherwise blank page; a cloud upon a sky that should be cloudless. Thus at a stroke of the pen did Manifestor rid the world of its joys no less than its sorrows.

Manifestor did not go so far as to declare that, since nothing is true, all is permitted. Even had he known of this Eastern illogic, he would not have countenanced it. Obviously, the Book of Life was true, consequently, for mankind not to believe in its Revealed Truths would be wrong. That was that.

When it came to nicety of expression, to turning the neat corners of the “*New Truth*,” or, in Manifestor’s own words, “Expressing the Inexpressible,” it was best, if you couldn’t *quite* express it, to stop, abruptly, if need be, fix the Inner Vision upon the Elysian Banks of the Beyond, and Go Into the Silence. Inspirationist Himself often did this, sometimes in the midst of his Sunday morning manifestations at the Tower of Babel. . . . Very effective. . . . Moments of inspiration, undoubtedly. . . . It was wonderful, really *wonderful*,

what one could feel. One could just *feel* rhythms of the Infinite, throbbing diapasons of the Cosmos which, oddly enough, kept time right along with one's own heartbeats! . . . Silence, *wonderful* silence. . . . Thought, Pure Thought, *Positive* Thought . . . Mystery . . . Beatitude . . . Silence, *Positive* Silence . . . *God* . . .

IX

IN the theory or Pure Principle of Positive Life, to experience its *best* results—though *all* were good—you simply let go all holds upon things, *as things*, scorned the material world nor set your thoughts upon its ways and customs. To be sure, in Positive Life, the same as in the common or garden variety, one actually worked, moved about, did things. One *must* eat, wear clothes, live—somehow, somewhere. Positive Life folk had never heard of Talleyrand's *mot* questioning this. But as that simple man-of-the-world, the material world, had the misfortune to exist in the Period of Darkness Before the Coming of Positive Life, it wouldn't have mattered anyhow; he *couldn't* have been right. . . . Your appearance, your *material* appearance? What did that matter in the face of Positive Appearance which was Appearanceless, without Form and Void? Or in the face of time, Positive Time which was Timeless? Of course, Manifestor liked to have people, especially the younger people, the girls anyhow, *look* nice, which they always did. But as for social position, reputation or the *way* you made your living—pooh! Nothing but snares and traps for the unwary; sheeplike pitfalls into which material-minded people fell and were lost, unless they fell out again; mere mundane devices for “Exteriorizing the Subconscious,” for getting it to depend upon that which was trivial, beside the point, transient, and also, since of the material world, fallacious.

But the errors of that material world were about to be rectified and set straight. It was all there in the Book

of Life. In this famous, or about-to-be-famous work, a work destined in its importance for mankind to outrank the Bhagavadgita, the Ramayana, the Koran, the Talmud, the Bible and the Lost Tablets of Atlantis, all Positive Truth had been mobilized. What was not included in the Book of Life was not worth including.

For what did those gigantic modern institutions, those hot-houses of atheism and “materiality” that taught “evolution” and “science” and were nothing more than huge night schools for the blind but conducted in the daytime and called “universities,” amount to anyhow? Did they show *The Way*? They did not. What did public libraries, private libraries, art galleries, churches, city halls, state houses, all those places where the rich, the powerful, before all, the so-called learned, paraded in the monstrous purple of their pride, amount to? Nothing. Less than nothing. They knew not the first principle of Positive Truth. Positive Truth, as it manifested itself through Positive Understanding, was something before which mountains moved, or could be made to move, though no necessity had yet arrived for moving any. Thus far Positive Life had confined itself to moving, or attempting to move, only the faithless. “*The Time*,” the “Great Day of Positive Demonstration,” was not quite here. But that Day of Positive Demonstration would surely come, was already on the way, was almost at hand, and *then* . . . Greater walls than those of Jericho would crumble! . . . The Temple of Jerusalem would yet be captured! . . . The meanwhile, wait, watch, study the Book of Life. There would be a *Sign*.

Positive Life had not yet “Attained to Numbers.” But, on the other hand, what did mere numbers prove? Nothing but numbers. There was a warning in the Book of Life, page 333, about numbers. “Beware ye of Numbers,” it said. That was all: “Beware ye of Numbers.” There was truth, Positive Truth, for you. Numbers were terrible things. Other Manifestors throughout history had been wrecked upon num-

bers. The Early Church itself had been lost through numbers. In three centuries the Science of Positive Healing had disappeared through numbers. "Beware ye of Numbers." It was very comforting, because, when a thing was small it was powerful through the very purity of its limitations; when it became a thing of size . . . Well, it was all there in the Book of Life: "*Beware ye of Numbers!*" . . . There were many things every bit as *deep* as that in the Book of Life.

X

WHEN the Lead of Leads was slowly germinating into the Story of Stories there seemed little likelihood of Positive Life crumbling the walls of Jericho, capturing the Temple of Jerusalem, or even moving Mohamet's mountain. Positive Life was not yet threatened with Numbers. On Sunday mornings, promptly at 10 o'clock, all the Positive Life members there were could be found on the seventh floor of the Tower of Babel conducting their usual service. They were not many, but all were most regular in attendance, devoted to Inspirationist Himself, and beyond the shadow of a doubt passionately sincere toward Positive Life. Each member possessed an autographed copy of the Book of Life from which, at long intervals of sedate silence, excerpts were read. It was not a perfect silence, not so perfect as could be observed at the home or Inspirational Center of Positive Life. Here elevators banged and rattled depositing other devotees of other cults upon other floors. Beyond and below them the vast murmur of the metropolis mounted upward to enter the open windows in a deep mumble of Sunday somnolence. It was annoying, but these meetings were a necessary part of Positive Propaganda which was to rescue a world lost from itself. The time would surely come when Sunday should be a Day of Silence, Positive Silence. Perhaps, with the increasing power of Positive Life, all other days would become days of silence, too.

Really, there was no *end* to the wondrous speculations raised through contemplating the Book of Life's Revealed Truths. . . .

The hall in which Positive Life manifested on Sundays contained a parlor organ whose wheezy struggles for breath gave a quite New England Friday-night-prayer-meeting effect, as that is the sort of organs New England prayer-meetings often have. Otherwise it was a perfectly good organ, and the tall pale girl with the Burne-Jones face and Rossetti eyes who played it would have made a very good organist for New England prayer-meetings. A little slow in her rendition of sacred music, still, she had just that moderate speed, that halting reluctance and unhurried modesty of touch which, quite independent of the composer's tempo, is most appreciated by prayer-meeting New Englanders who love not to proceed faster than the sometimes poor light from smoky lamps, or their own phthisical limitations, permits their following finely printed song manuals. "Organist" was a simple and saintly girl. She dressed *à la* Gainsborough, though not *à la* Lely. Positive Life members *loved* her.

Inspirationist Himself rather suggested Rodin's "Thinker" in his way of bending forward at the edge of the carved chair placed upon the slightly raised red-carpeted platform, keeping his eyes fastened on the front row of deferentially empty seats, and holding his head in one hand: a classic pose for so theologic a setting. His was a large head with a great wave of iron-grey hair tossed upward and back in that decisive fashion and exact attention to detail which has been announced a sure sign of genius. His eyes were of the same pale and trusting blue as the girl with the Burne-Jones face. They had the stark stare that flashes from oval, walnut-framed pictures adorning bedrooms and parlors in New England or Ohio Valley farmhouses, that post-daguerreotype stare with which the folk, prior to their mastery of studio *sang froid*, and in momentary expectation of they knew not what

mystery, unwinkingly defied the threatening muzzles of cameras. Beneath his eyes the skin was somewhat puffy and in keeping with the full, freshly shaven cheeks that ran over the chin to make, as it were, another beginning below. A "thoughtful face," or one some might consider such, since its animation was suspended just enough to neither frighten nor repel, attract nor disturb. It was the sort of face that goes well with expansive and highly polished shirt-fronts, with heavy watchchains, prominent fraternal order insignia and "turn down" collars. A substantial bourgeois face that one would never turn in the street to look at twice; a face too simple for masking deeply calculated craft, or for registering the least suspicion that life itself is capable of harboring far stronger fates than could ever be designed by men.

There was even a touch of boyishness about this face, owing perhaps, to its fixed expression of continuous surprise, as though it had never gotten over its astonishment at arriving either too early or too late in a world prodigiously difficult to understand, amazingly indifferent to its owner's merits, and a world impossible perchance for him to master. Through the background of his fifty years one could picture that boy: undoubtedly the unfinished product of some small American town; an only son; a mother's pet for whom "great things" were prophesied; suppressed at home and knowing no freedom abroad; none too smart at public school; flunking often enough at some obscure theological college to sense the threat of impending expulsion, and certainly the threat that an already long-sustained support would presently, because non-existent, be withdrawn.

Such was his actual history; one common in America where multitudes of "educated" men come and go with such depressing anonymity; are jacks-of-all-trades, masters of none; a little preaching, a little teaching, a little "clerking," even, at a pinch, a little labor, and the final drift cityward to be swallowed by a deeper poverty and darker anonymity

—if such were possible—than before. In short, a typical American Commoner: *proletarian* in status and function, *petit bourgeois* in tradition and aspiration.

Still, there was some slight variation from type in the discoverer of Positive Life, enough at least for him to somehow interest the three-score persons, most of whom were women, who had "joined." Perhaps Manifestor was not so dull as he looked. Perhaps, as he claimed, Positive Life really could do things for one. The women all said so; and the inspirational potency of feminine neurosis is a well-known phenomenon throughout the history of a world quaint enough to contain it.

XI

ONLY a few of the women were young; the others, with that deferential and slightly patronizing falsity used when people really mean "old," could be spoken of as "middle-aged." They were also of that nondescript type seen everywhere, "in" everything yet seldom "of" anything; the sort of women who aspire, not so much for social recognition apparently, since they know so little of society in America, as that they hunger and thirst after the lethal waters of self-forgetting. Always on the move, forever flitting from disillusionment to disillusionment, restlessly seeking that which life never held for their kind since the passing of the Great Abbeys—release from the desperate grip of a totally insufficient femininity—they, in common with millions throughout America, were secretly aflame with desire to pull to the ground the slowly lifting structure of the New World civilization, or, what was to them the same thing, "man," masculinity and all its works.

Like the Old Man who exploited the public for flaws, like the social revolutionaries who ransack history for flaws, like all other killjoys and pests that infect life, so also were such women obsessed by a fixed predilection for flaws. They could scent a flaw as

vultures and buzzards scent the obscene feasts of the desert. Flawed themselves, they could see, and could only see, flaws everywhere else; and all of them, the Old Man, the revolutionists, the faddists, the mental flagellants and social recalcitrants generally, were cut from the same cloth, and that cloth itself very much botched in the making.

While America's creative forces wrestled with the seven devils of their chaotic background—their closeness to the soil, their tangled ancestry, their world without forms, and ever-thwarted in their instinct toward a permanent governing personnel around which to build political, social and æsthetic significance, there had come such tidal waves of immigration as to all but swamp them. Unfortunately, too, many of these immigrants had wrapped in their shawls and bandanas the Old World textbooks of revolt, which they promptly palmed off to America's youth as "culture," as the *only* interpretation of history, of men and manners, or of life itself. America's comfortablists, the propertied classes, lacking an indigenous culture of their own, and far too engrossed in their play with materialistic forces which, for them, seemed completely adequate and indemnifying, paid no attention. Thence the cults.

. . . And now the women. . . .

"Unfit for action yet unable to rest," true "leaners," physiological changelings caught in the hidden undercurrents of biological perversities, already, beyond the vague and secret dreams of Inspirationist Himself even, many of Positive Life's female members envisaged the Great Substitution. Positive Life was but a "step," the first. There would be others—their own growing daughters: other women—their growing daughters. Stretching into an incalculable future they could picture the all-conquering sweep of a "New Life." They thrilled to the thought of its immeasurable victories. They could "just feel" its wonderful possibilities. They visioned whole armies of believers, untold riches, magnificent churches, seraphic choirs, luxu-

riant decorations, gorgeous ceremonials; and themselves they saw as High Priestesses: lofty, serene, unapproachable: wielders of power unutterable: under their feet a world of defeated men. . . .

They did not say this to anyone—outright; but between the older women of Positive Life, even as among the thousand and one other cults which amused, entertained or irritated America, there existed that "*perfect understanding*" which gives to scraps of phrases their full meaning, and to the merest reference a point. . . .

Positive Life girls had "come in to *The Life*" because of such mothers, and also because just then it was a quite prevalent custom among numerous young people in the city of the Tower of Babel to join the Restless Ranks. Some were not yet in their teens, some were older, and one, the "poor, wronged, stubborn girl," lacked but two months of that quite definitive age somehow fallen upon in northern latitudes for lifting official embargos from feminine self-disposal. Out of her supposed plight, and out of the missing two months, the Old Man created his Story of Stories, that newspaper sensation of the year. Sixty days was not long for grafting a crown of editorial laurels; still, it could be done, as the Old Man proved by doing it.

Though she was a quite mature looking young lady, tall as any Positive Life *dévote*, the *Globe* was curiously insistent that this young lady was not herself at all but another. Whenever her photograph appeared in the *Globe* it was always with the wrong caption. According to these, she was Evylin Summers, not Meta Byrnes, as christened by her parents. Evylin Summers *was* a Positive Life member, a very nice girl in Meta's opinion. She was very fond of Evylin. In fact they were chums. Times without number they had worked together in *The Life*—and not been one bit jealous either!—vying to see which could render Inspirationist Himself the greatest service in producing that world-compelling work, the Book of Life. But, after all, *she* was Meta Byrnes

and not Evylin Summers, even though there was, or should be, no such thing as discrimination, distinction or difference in Positive Life.

However, this peculiar discrepancy in *Globe* photography was easily explained. Evylin, whose name was also constantly appearing under the wrong picture, under *Meta's* picture,—though actually the older of the two, she was twenty-five was Evylin—*looked* the younger, quite younger than Meta, was not so tall as Meta, fitted the angle of the story better than Meta, and was, altogether—well, more “childlike,” more “innocent,” more “injured” looking than Meta, more what a “betrayed” girl *ought* to look like. With injured innocence thus accurately portrayed—the proper type to properly match both injury and innocence—the public, now licking its chops with relish, now snapping its eyes in the barely suppressed envy of its moral indignation, thoroughly agreed with the *Globe* that it was a crying shame, the man a villain and “hanging too good for him,” and that “*something* ought to be done about it.”

XII

WITH such high standards of moral efficiency, of course the *Globe* could not fail to play up the fact that most of the women's husbands and girls' fathers were missing from Positive Life ranks. It was a curious sign of the times, said the *Globe*, a most deplorable sign in fact, that behind the backs of modern business men, their very modern wives often worshipped at the altars of strange gods, pursued stranger cultures, chased the rainbows of esoteric cults, and, woe upon the age! often held ideas in opposition to the ideas of their husbands. Always thoroughly up to date in its discoveries, the *Globe* was “compelled to point out” the alarming prevalence of ideas among women at all.

And *such* ideas!

The *Globe* was shocked; not deeply nor irrecoverably, of course, but only as respectably retired keepers of bawdy-

houses, cautiously secure in the indemnifying somnolence of an otherwise purposeless satiety, are shocked, which is to say, without noticeable effort. It was not the Old Man, nor his staff of alert and corrupt young men, nor even the owners of the *Globe* who were shocked, but the *Globe* itself. Still, this did not in the least deter the *Globe* from communicating each last titillation of that shock to its very own child, the public. It was not at all stingy, the *Globe*, at least not with its shocks. Even as with other creatures of the animal kingdom, ever-solicitous of their offspring, the *Globe* could also be a good, a beneficent, a kindly beast, passing on to its whelps the best bits, often indeed, crunching and mumbling them nicely beforehand.

. . . Yes, such was the misfortune with many modern wives, the worse misfortune, too, of their so tender, unsuspecting daughters, but the greater misfortune of their hard-working, reliable, safe-and-sane husbands who knew nothing of strange gods, of rainbow cults or perverse ideas, instead, spending all their time in making the wheels of civilization whirl with ever-increasing power and speed. More power and more speed to them, said the *Globe*.

Positive Life was an example in point. The father of that wronged girl, a respectable jeweler, “one of our widely known business men,” had been “astounded,” “enraged,” “completely upset” by the startling revelations of the *Globe*. Like the *Globe*, he could scarcely believe such things actually took place in a civilized community. He also was shocked, or at least the *Globe* said so, as it had said all these other things.

He was pretty fair copy, was the wronged girl's father. Daily the *Globe* played him up as “consulting counsel,” “in conference” with the Prosecutor, “interviewing police officials,” quitting his ruined and broken household, victim of, if not a faithless—at this point even the *Globe* had to exercise a *little* care, but it knew how to do that, too

—at least a near-faithless wife, to live in a downtown hotel,—or was it a club? The City Prosecutor had never shown the slightest sign of failing to realize with the rest of the *Globe's* "Million Readers Daily" the "seriousness of this case and its deleterious effect upon public morals." In fact that official got as keen enjoyment from the Story of Stories as any other citizen whom the *Globe* kept equally well informed upon the "progress of the case." Nevertheless the *Globe* persisted in depicting this prize lead — this broken-hearted father and near-betrayed husband—as "pressing the Prosecutor's Office for drastic action."

That is to say, the *Globe* persisted in this until, one day, much to its surprise—a surprise it considerably failed to pass on to the public—it found that abused man, that wronged girl's father, that near-ruined husband, had suddenly taken an about-face, and would thereafter appear for the defense. He was said to have "had a talk" with Inspirationist Himself. He had "become reconciled" with his wife. He had "looked into" Positive Life. He hadn't seen much, anything in fact, "out of the way."

But this didn't bother the *Globe*, not in the least. The Old Man *featured* this. There was no loss, not an iota, not in Positive Life. Everything counted. Everything went. *Everything!* Whatever came to the Old Man's mill was grist. Didn't this prove what the *Globe* had contended right along?—that the prisoner was one of the keenest criminals of the age?—a very dangerous character indeed?—a desperate menace to the community?—a man who, in a single hour's talk through the bars of a prison door, could win over the father of a daughter whose honor he had ruined, and a wife whose reputation he had ambushed, what was there such an evil man couldn't do?

The Old Man ran his bow across this bass chord until a competitor got out another "interview" denying all other "interviews" of all other papers, swearing its own "interview" was the

only true and authorized statement. The Old Man was furious! He'd show 'em yet! He sent his alert and corrupt young men out to the wronged girl's home in twos, in trios, in batches. Their insistence finally brought her father to the door in his shirt-sleeves, where he stood belligerently and holding in one hand what looked very much like a baseball bat.

No, he hadn't been living in any hotel! No, nor any club either! Certainly he was on speaking terms with his wife, why in the samhill shouldn't he be? And what the samhill business was it of theirs? Who in the samhill wanted to know anyhow? . . . The public's right to know? . . . The *Globe*? . . . Well, to hell with the *Globe*! He considered the *Globe* a damned nuisance. He wished to be let alone. He was sick of the whole business—a lot of moonshine over a lot of silly women chasing religion when they ought to be at home minding their own business. A . . .

Oh, then he *disapproved* of . . . ?

No! He didn't disapprove of *anything*. He didn't believe in arguing religion anyhow; and turned to slam the door in their faces, after threatening to kick any one or all of the *Globe's* alert and corrupt young men out of his home the next time they bothered him. As they were leaving, he opened the door again to call out that they'd better lay off mixing up his daughter's pictures too, while they were about it!

XIII

It was excellent and truly good that there should be such a thing as the *Globe*, always actively and unselfishly serving the public in the righteous business of letting the public's right hand know what the public's left hand was up to. Otherwise, amid the bustle of its own nearly-as-important affairs, how would the public ever know? It couldn't watch everything and everybody all at once, much as it might like to. And only a few, a criminally few, in fact, could crowd into the small, dim, smoke-stained courtroom where the

trial was held, with not one but *three* judges on the bench and *crowds* of lawyers: a real sensation.

And while those who couldn't get in were thinking about it, keyed to a fine edge of resentment for having to stand, Spartan-like, in snow and slush up to the tops of their rubbers, shivering in their overcoats, flapping their arms for warmth, hanging on adjacent fences that looked into the court, sitting on the courtroom window ledges and clinging like bees to the street poles, wasn't there—now that you came to think about it—*wasn't* there something the matter with City Fathers who failed to provide better accommodations for trials? Shouldn't there be good, big, well-lighted and *warm* halls with room *inside* for *everybody*? Why, you could never tell when something *big*—like this here Positive Life thing—might come up *any* time! What was the public paying out its good money for unless for a little *service*? What became of all that money anyhow? That's what the public wanted to know! Well, everybody knew that politics in this town was rotten! That City Hall gang. . . .

The *Globe* staged a wonderful trial. All the wooden spoons had to admit that, even though it did hurt. There was no doubt that the Old Man was a wonder. He was masterly. He was a *bear*! He set an awful pace! But he knew how to put over a story! You'd have to hand it to him on that. He knew how to work things up even as savages in Black Africa work things up, booming with dead men's bones on hollow logs, beating on tom-toms and giant gongs until league upon league of jungle-hearts are throbbing in deliriums of hostility or superstition, of torture or revenge or fear.

Whenever the trial dragged under the solemn cross-fire of technical delay, the Old Man was incarnate with the inventiveness for which he was so famous and so envied. It was at such a point that he featured the "Mysterious Woman in Black." Old stuff, but this Positive Life trial actually had one! You could get a picture of her every

day when she drove up in a taxi, got out, paid the chauffeur, and was escorted to a special seat by a bailiff. Try as they would, the *Globe's* young men had not been able to identify her. They used all the old things, bought George, the bailiff, numerous drinks, had confidential asides with him, George'd this and George'd that, gave him familiar slaps on the shoulder, and, as a last resort, made a sly trip out to George's wife in an attempt to wheedle or bribe her into telling. But the Mysterious Woman in Black had evidently paved the way to such ringside favors by a very liberal gratuity, for George kept her identity, if he knew it, remarkably well concealed for a public functionary, above all, considering it was the *Globe* that wanted to know. She continued to attend the trial, and, as from the first, continued to wear a heavy, "ab-so-lutely impenetrable" black veil. Exasperating! Damnable, really, not to know who she was!

"Well, lay off'n her for a while," commanded the Old Man. "Get another lead on that youngest one. I got an idea."

The Old Man did have an idea, several, in fact. From his specialist in sex-stuff, the *Globe's* prize smut-hound, he had learned of a growing coolness between the two girls whose pictures were always so accurately misplaced in the *Globe's* Story of Stories. The Old Man thought something might be worked up there. Her father hadn't liked the way the *Globe* handled her picture either, as if *he* had anything to say about it! Well, the Old Man would show 'em! They'd find out the *Globe* meant business when it started anything!

Conversations with the "Art Department" followed more conversations with the sex-specialist. A daring chance that it *might* work, a few more judicious misplacements of the photographs, and now, for this, done very nicely—the *nicest* pictures Evylin had ever seen of herself, far nicer than those of Meta alongside—and, the trick was turned! Meta threatened to weaken! Meta was

beginning to weaken! Meta appeared—"in the dead of night," the *Globe* had it, though it was only 8 P. M. Greenwich—at a "secret conference with Prosecuting Attorney." Meta weakened. Meta "*confessed!*"

It was *good!* The *Globe* had scored again! A scoop, too! Wooden spoons cracked reportorial heads in every direction elsewhere. Of course it *was* a *Globe* story, originally; but the Old Man had them all going anyhow; the others just had to line up or line out; which last would mean nothing less than letting *all* the public run to the *Globe* to hold up the wooden bowl of its head for the daily gruel. The public clamored and cried, whooped, snickered, yelled and yammered: "More! More!" The public's blood was up. The public was in the full heat of the chase. The public smelled raw meat. The public could almost taste the finish. The *Globe* saw to it the public's blood was kept up, that it held hard to the chase, that it never lost its scent of raw meat, but most tantalizingly held off the finish. The *Globe* knew a thing or two!

XIV

It is doubtful if anyone whose heart was not set upon the Nowhere, the Not Yet or the Never would have been able to quite appreciate the chaste purity of sentiment that obtained at Inspirational Center between Positive Life members. Positive Life had not yet reached the archaic nomenclature of theeing and thouing, but the feeling was there. It made itself known by members brothering and sistering each other instead, by the very chaste kisses upon all arrivals and departures, by little pressings of hands, little pats on the cheeks or shoulders of the girls when they were assisting at the *ac-couchement* of that immortal work, the Book of Life,—the older women being far in the rear of the second-rate apartment doing the dishes. A *most* loving atmosphere.

Just what it was that really took place at Inspirational Center, the *Globe*

never quite revealed. Perhaps it was too secret for the *Globe* to find out. Perhaps the *Globe* never really knew. Perhaps no one else knew. Perhaps, *perhaps* it never happened. But the Fifth Horseman's sword is Innuendo. . . .

If it never happened, the public was thoughtfully shielded from such uninteresting knowledge. That was not what the public bought its copy of the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth" for—to be told it never happened. On the contrary, most carefully did the public daily trim its ear for the first rumbling roar from old saber tooth. . . . *Ahhhh!* There it was! Front page—right where it should be, of course! Right where you could always expect it. Right down the middle; big type; most of the story in the headlines:

SAYS POSITIVE LIFE PROPHET

TAUGHT VICE

GIRL CONFESSES

NEW REVELATIONS IN SIN CULT

Good! Good paper—the *Globe* . . . You could *trust* the *Globe*—live wire; always had all the news . . . the news . . . all the news . . . all the news that's fit to think. . . . Of course! Ha! Ha! . . . "All the News That's Fit to Think."

Then its Imperial Highness, the public, spoke. Its voice ran deep and strong: deep as Conviction, strong as Truth; and this is what it spoke:

"Well, I see they're going right after that Positive Life crowd! That's what they ought to do! . . . clean up the city! . . . hope they give him life! . . . too much of this young girl business! . . . kinda hard on Byrnes, his wife and daughter stepping out like that! . . . Oh, yes, I know *Byrnes*, we're in the same lodge. Why, only last night I was talking with a man who knows a fellow whose cousin's a clerk in the Prosecutor's Office, and *he* said it was 'fierce—rotten!' He said that Positive Life gang, 'specially that leader, was . . . "

Oh, it was penetrating, the public, a wise old bird. You couldn't put any-

thing over on the public. No sireee! It also knew a thing or two. Not even the *Globe* had anything on the public for *that*. . . .

XV

It was the sixty-day business which delayed the finish. A highly important point, that; almost as important, it would seem from the lawyers, as whether she had or hadn't, or whether he had or hadn't. The *Globe* was on the side of the sixty days. The court seemed to be also. There was no question about the Prosecutor; he stood on the Law. Not the Law as it might be "twisted and perverted by the very clever counsel for defense," but the Law as Law. And when it came to the Law, Your Honor, the Law knew no moral moratorium of sixty days; no, nor sixty hours, sixty minutes, not even sixty seconds. The Law was the Law.

The court-appointed defense was against the sixty days. Inspirationist Himself had refused to employ or even accept counsel, declaring his faith in the supremacy of Positive Truth to carry him safely through any mere worldly crisis. What did sixty days or sixty centuries matter to Positive Time which was Timeless? He was not afraid of anything either prosecution or defense could do to him. Positive Life could move mountains, and at any moment might move one. What was a court, what were lawyers, police, jails before Positive Life? Nothing—less than nothing! A Sign might appear at any moment. And then . . . Confusion among the judges, confusion among the lawyers, confusion among the police, confusion worse confounded among that hard-faced snickering crowd of unbelievers out there in front who kept their beady eyes fastened on his every move—especially the women. . . . Oh, for a Sign, *The Sign*! . . . Oh, for a Sword of Righteousness! . . . Roofs curling back like scrolls of parchment! . . . Chariots of fire! . . . Clouds parting! . . . Worlds falling! . . . End without end! . . .

While prosecution and defense were *corpus delicting* each other, the *corpus delicti* herself, discovering her friend, Evylin, was not at all to blame about the photographs, suddenly repudiated her confession.

No. Nothing had ever happened between Manifestor and herself. She hadn't meant it *that* way. She had simply not understood.

But, how about . . . ?

Defense objected. *Corpus delicti*, defense declared, was a "splendid horse-woman," a familiar figure along the city's Mall, and it was well known, etc. But that was not all. Defense had taken the trouble to trace *corpus delicti's* life back, far back, back to its remotest childhood, years and years ago, to find that, even then, in those dim days of distance, *corpus delicti* had been unusually given to childish athletics, remarked among all her companions, the girl champion of the neighborhood, a *wonderful* rope-skipper.

Defense further called His Honor's attention to sturdy robustness of *corpus delicti*: a matured woman, Your Honor, if ever there was one; eminently within her sacred, God-given rights of self-disposal, had there been any such matter involving defendant and *corpus delicti* which, needless to say, there had not. Defense had even found a witness who would submit to His Honor, in the privacy of His Honor's retiring-room, positive proof that *corpus delicti* had once . . . and that defendant was not. . . .

At this point prosecution objected but was not sustained, the court retiring to its sanctuary behind the throne of law, and—followed by the *Mysterious Woman in Black*.

Ha! . . . *That* was who the Woman in Black was! . . . *Mystery upon mystery!*

Well, there'd be a chance to find out who she really was now. The courtroom was agog with excitement. Appreciating the exceeding favor of personally witnessing such a dramatic turn, the public made haste to share its good luck with the unfortunate ones outside. Even as the Old Man and his staff of

young men sometimes felt, the public really was a good, a beneficent, a kindly beast.

In a manner of speaking, the sixty days *was* the point; at least since she had denied it, it gave you *something* to go on; she couldn't deny *that*. That much was definite, anyhow. For how were the staff of young men from the *Globe*, so alert, so punctiliously groomed, so really clever and wise and corrupt to know the other? Of course they assumed she had. What else could denial mean? In any case they couldn't learn anything from Inspirationist Himself, as that principal to the Story of Stories persisted in a most exasperating speechlessness for hours, fixing his eyes upon a stain in the ceiling, the continuous surprise of his full and now—since they had forbidden him razors—bearded face, more surprised than ever. Nor did that pale woman, that perverse girl's mother, divulge any secrets of "*The Life*." In the opinion of the *Globe's* young men they were *all* a strange tribe and should be sent to jail on general principles, especially that girl—holding out on them like that! Going back on her confession—and a *Globe* scoop!

But they'd soon know something good now; just as soon as His Honor called court again and put the Mysterious Woman in Black on the stand. She'd *have to* take the oath, declare her full name, show herself. . . . Wonder what she had? The Prosecutor would take care of her anyhow. He'd show her up. . . . Front page stuff, all right. Top leaders. Full length picture prob'ly, with the veil thrown back for a heavy background "mystery" effect. . . . Everything, of course, depended on *who* she was, *what* she said, what she didn't say, what His Honor said, what the prosecution said, what the defense said, what the girl said, and, with luck, what the Woman in Black said might loosen up old Manifestor himself, and then mebbe *he'd* say something. . . . Say, he *was* rotten copy! Couldn't get a squeak outa *him*! Foxy guy, old Manifestor. *Nobody* got anything on him—

yet. But they would! Trust them. Trust the little old *Globe*; they'd pry him open with the wooden spoon yet. . . . Better slip out now for a minute while His Honor was in back there and phone the Old Man this Woman in Black stuff—he'd wanta know. . . .

XVI

THE Old Man did want to know, decidedly. He had not played up the Woman in Black for several days. He was keeping her in reserve for one of those periodical delays when prosecution and defense bombarded the sixty days with their heavy guns of precedent:—*Case 57869234, Peters vs. State, Crim. Code 1887: or Lamkin vs. Hopper et al, Case 9572593, Revised Statutes, U. S., 1888*. Her taking the stand was good, excellent, very handy, just right. Needed something like that. Never do to let the Story of Stories drag. This would speed her up! . . . Guessed he'd go below and give 'em a little action.

The Old Man was wonderful in action, *masterly*! Although he had such things as staff editors, managers, assistant managers, specialists and hosts of regulars, he seldom used them except as a sort of graduate messenger service when he went into "action." After trying his steel files, which he never failed to do before leaving, he descended from the high seclusion of his twenty-two stories, from "the Bridge," and appeared "on deck" in the editorial rooms. He was very fond of marine phrases as he felt these always put him, at a single bound as it were, definitely at the center of things, and, too, rather set him up with those taller, fatter, bigger men among whom his diminutive size was to him painfully apparent. Of course he very quickly made up for all that by the rapidity of his orders, delivered in his usual high staccato bark, sharply, always to the point, abrupt and final.

But the *Globe's* editorial rooms resembled a battlefield far more than the scene of a naval engagement. Things sink, wrecks of battle float away, at sea

all disappears. From the martial pollutions of men the great waters purify themselves in the ceaseless sway of their eternal immensities. Here nothing sank, floated away or disappeared. Here all was in sight, nakedly, without shame, as upon a field of carnage.

Here was noise, terrific noise, thunder even. Whenever pressroom doors flew open they vomited the deep boom of gigantic implements hurtling the *Globe's* deadly projectiles of exaggeration, panic and deceit into the close formations of the public. Through the rapid-fire rattle of typewriters, incessant as small-arms shooting by infantry, by advance guards and snipers, came a muffled thudding as of "duds" when occasional, small, shining, copy-charged shells shot angrily from the brazen snouts of pneumatic tubes whose long gleaming barrels pierced the walls like menacing field pieces. There were shouts, loud calls, groans and sounds as of cries of agony mingling with a confused blather of excited voices and with curses flung like hand-grenades into the running background of monotonous copy-reading.

Bells rang; the private registry of fire-alarm bells, messenger bells, elevator bells, bells from a pressroom voracious for copy, frantic for ammunition, while telephones persisted in a never-ending jangle of ill-tempered efforts of the front line to attract City Desk before the huge gong of Deadline should sound as sound the respiting bugles of armistice to war-glutted armies. A smoke as of battle hung over the place; over the batteries of desks, the cluttered tables and flung down chairs; over the heads of re-write men visored in green shades, helmeted in headphones, bare-armed, coatless and collarless. Precocious and ugly little copy-boys stumbled and slid about sleepily, dashing through the smoke like despatch-bearers and ammunition-runners, or, like hungry camp-followers, nosed greedily amongst blood-colored sheets of discarded supplements. Littered like a battlefield, the floor was strewn with the clipped and rifled copies of rival

papers mutilated by the re-write men, disemboweled remains from their mopping-up parties, from their raids and forays into the enemies' lines. The whole room was deep with such papers: these corpses of yesterday's papers, of afternoon papers, of papers slain and crumpled, crushed under foot, spurned, spat upon, vile and done for casualties.

Through it all as upon a battleground was an overpowering stench: a stench not yet of death but of what is not alive: a sickening smell of fresh paste and of rancid paste, an effluvium from the leavings of stale lunches, from fetid breaths, wet paper and poor cigars, from whiskey, from pipes, cigarettes and burned matches which, with the nauseous odor of ink and acrid fumes of molten lead permeated the place in a thick pall as of gas, a repulsive and deadly gas, the poison gas of the press, the blighting breath of the Fifth Horseman.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Deadline!!!

From all those cursing, sweating, nerve-wracked veterans of the daily battle, those blasé conscripts of a never-ended war, who had brought to earth, ambushed, surrounded, shot down, bombed, stabbed, bayoneted, hacked, hammered, kicked, herded, bullied and rushed the day's scandal into the prison-camp of the next—the Bulldog, the Ten O'Clock, the Sunrise, the Country, the Out-of-Town, the Special, the Regular, the "Home" and the Last Edition of the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth"—from all those weary gladiators of organized insanity, those hostlers of the Fifth Horseman, a sigh of relief went out.

Tobacco was re-lit, chairs and eyeshades pushed back, helmeting headphones flung down. Men rose, stretched themselves, yawned. They said little. They put on their coats. They spat. They left. A hell of a life!

Another day, another armistice for a few hours, while the brunt of battle swept on to another arm, to the heavy artillery of the presses, whose awesome

roll and rumble and roar shook the building with a sound furious and deep, with a tumult tremendous and frightful like the terrific cannonading of Big Berthas and Long Toms that kill at terrible distances, are hidden from friend and foe, are impersonal as fate, but none the less satanic for all of that. . . .

But some say the Fifth Horseman of the Apocalypse is Satan. . . .

XVII

It lacked several hours of Deadline when the Old Man departed from that battleground of the news, leaving it, too, in the condition of intensive excitement usually following his abrupt, masterly appearances. Pressmen cursed and fumed over forms to be torn down and new matter to be set up. Re-write men began a-fresh their fevered scavengry of *Globe* files and the heaps of slain about their desks, running over back copy in search for points they had forgotten or failed to make on the Woman in Black. One would have thought everything "covered," squeezed dry, stripped naked, as it were. But nothing was ever thoroughly "covered" or squeezed dry at the *Globe* so long as a shade of real or fictitious meaning could still be gotten from it. Words were cheap. Re-write men were paid for their words—theirs and other men's, for squeezing dry, stripping naked, for bending, twisting and warping facts and fancies into similitudes of fresh appearance, if not fresh meaning. This was what they had on foot just now: a fresh appearance in the next issue of all the old stuff and whatever new the Woman in Black should contribute. . . . It was hard work, furious work, devilish work; it *got* you—but that was the Game. . . .

What *did* she have, anyway? *Who* in heck was she? What did she and that Manifestor fellow have in common? . . . And that girl, too? . . . Anyhow, this Woman in Black, being an older woman, prob'ly she'd try and clear Manifestor of the more serious

charge. . . . But wait, *we'll* have something to say about *that*. . . .

The Old Man pondered thus on his way back to the seclusion of his twenty-two stories. Probably, he mused, she'd take the stand and say. . . . What *would* she say? There was the rub! If he could only anticipate what she'd say, he'd have all the rest of them beat. . . . He was pretty good at anticipating, but this was—er—what you might call sort of delicate stuff. You could never tell *who* she might be, what she might say. . . . Hmmm. . . . Several slip-ups on the Story of Stories already. Never do. 'Course he'd made up for *those*—quick enough; couldn't catch *him* napping, not the Old Man, not the "Highest Paid Editor in the World!" . . . Delicate stuff, all right; but between himself and Old Smut, his sex-specialist, the *Globe's* famous smut-hound, they'd work it out. Trust them; trust the *Globe*; the public should not go unfed. . . .

But where *was* Old Smut? Unlike him not to keep in touch with a big thing like this coming off. Still, must be all right with Old Smut on the trail. Old Smut never fell down on a story, never! . . . There was a boy for you! Good newspaper man, Old Smut. Best on the *Globe*. Didn't know where he'd be without Old Smut. No foolish prejudices about Old Smut, not when it came to a *story*. No *sir!* Old Smut was *there!* High or low, rich or poor, divorce, elopement, runaway, breach-of-promise, love nests, amorous notes, seductions, betrayals, invasions, bloody slaughters,—they were all alike to Old Smut. Didn't make any difference, Old Smut read 'em *all* the riot act! He was the Original Draughtsman of the Cross-on-the-Sidewalk, Old Smut was. . . . And such sex-stuff copy Old Smut could sling—*whew!* . . . Well, where in heck *was* he?

The Old Man was getting nervous. Pretty near Deadline, and not a bit of their copy in yet. Never do! He yelped into the desk phones. He called the saloon across from the courthouse, and was told that court had adjourned

—everything quiet over there. Humph! Well, they'd be coming in soon now. All right, he'd wait. But this certainly was rotten reporting!

He sat down and began fumbling a silver snuff-box supposed to have once been the property of the Victor of St. Helena. The Old Man used it for a paper-weight. His desk, the entire room, in fact, was decorated with such souvenirs. They were the Old Man's only hobby—aside from his steel files. Suspended over his desk, sole touch of color in the room, was a large copy of the David painting of the Emperor in scarlet coronation robes. Elsewhere were several consoles, a saddle-bag, some death masks and a bust or two of that departed greatness. At one side, set sacramentally against royal blue velvet or framed in small carven boxes within a shining glass case, were numerous *objets d'art*: a scarlet quill pen, a clipping of lace from the Emperor's riding habit, a silver buckle from a slipper, and several of those bits of metal so sacred to the manhood of France, those medals "*la Grande Armée*" had sought so hard and forgotten so quickly when the weeping willows of St. Helena alone mourned that fallen Caesar.

The Old Man was rather a connoisseur in such things. He felt they possessed a special significance in being just here; as though the superlative power and unbounded dignity of this great empire of the news centering here in his own hands, in his very head, as it were, conferred upon these relics far more than any ordinary posthumous value, and indeed, so to speak, confirmed their value. . . . Yes, it *was* a truly wonderful thing to rule the "Greatest Newspaper on Earth," to say nothing of being the "Highest Paid Editor of the World"; a more wonderful thing, considering many points of similarity, to say nothing of the unquestioned superiority of the age, to be Napoleon of the News than Napoleon of the French. Besides, he, the Old Man had never suffered a defeat, and that, they'd have to admit, was more

than could be said of the other. At any rate, they were much alike. Undoubtedly, the Emperor of the French resembled the Emperor of the News—the Old Man moved closer the small marble bust with the hollow head that served him for a tobacco-jug . . . hmm . . . not so lofty in brow, perhaps, nor could that other Emperor have possibly been more decisive in speech, more fertile in imagination, more instant in speech. The Old Man also knew the feeling of power, holding, in a stroke of his pen, in a single drop of ink, as it were, success, failure, lives, destinies, reputations. . . .

Where were those men? This was getting a bit thick! He'd be slipping somebody a blue envelope for this. He'd show 'em what it meant to neglect the Napoleon of the News. . . . He rose and began to pace the floor in short, quick steps, the only kind of steps, considering the length of his legs and the normal speed of other men, he could take. But then, Napoleon had walked just that way, so he had heard. Passing them, he gave the handles of his steel files angry little tugs such as a puppy gives discarded clothing . . . Locked. All right. Should be. Always keep 'em locked. . . . Proudly he ran his eye over them. There was *system* for you! Why, he knew those files so well he could almost put his hand on their contents in the dark. Tier upon tier, block after block, they ran around the room like the serried coffins of catacombs; and, like those repositories of the dead, each was cabalistically marked and ticketed in the Old Man's precise manner; each containing, too, its innumerable corpses, its skeletons of ruined reputations, its wreckage of ominous mishaps, senseless and needless exposures, its mess of decayed scraps and picked bone from every maimed frivolity and squalid despair in the human agony: litter, refuse and offal of the vulture's nest.

Well, there'd soon be more stuff to file, now. Live stuff, too: eight or ten people, all right here in the city. . . . Big story, this Positive Life . . .

Waving some typewritten sheets, a cub bounced into the room without even knocking. Before the Old Man could compose a fitting frown, in the enthusiastic manner of cubs, the Old Man was being told a tale.

"I gotta *whale* of a story here? . . . Young Stone—that big department store son—just got shot down on the 'Row.' . . . Number 22—Madame Jones's Club. She shot him. . . . You know, that black place. . . . They took him up to the General, but I got the *whole* story. . . . They don't think he's going to live. He . . ."

"Can't use it," the Old Man snapped. "Gotta *real* sex story coming off tonight. Positive Life thing—Woman in Black stuff—she's taking the stand."

The cub's face fell. He looked almost sick. As he turned to go, the Old Man, taking the story, added hastily and magnanimously:

"But that's good work. Fine. Fine stuff. Some other time. You did quite right to bring it right up to me. You're coming along. But can't use it now with this Positive Life thing running. . . . And say, when you go down, stop off and send up the Advertising Manager if he's around. I wanta see him."

When the cub had gone, the Old Man quickly scanned the story.

"Hmmm . . . Say, this is good! This'll make 'em come across. I knew we'd get something on 'em one of these days with young Stone running wild. . . . Shot—eh? . . . And down *there*! Yep, I guess they'll advertise *now*."

Where in the name of samhill were those boys with the Positive Life stuff? Damn! This was too strong! Keeping everything wide open for 'em. Great Scott! Holding everybody up! What'd they think—think they were working on some country weekly? He'd show 'em!

It was Old Smut who led the boys. Usually anything but hesitant, Old Smut seemed strangely at loss for words. He labored under a severe stress of some sort, something the Old Man, keen as he was at reading expressions, could not make out in the quick glance he flung at Old Smut.

"What do you fellows think you're working for—the *Hayville Weekly*?" he snapped. "Where's your copy? Give it to me! Whatdye mean—holding everything up this way—huh?"

"B—b—b—but, didn't you hear?" began Old Smut in an unusual stutter.

"Hear *what*? I ain't heard nothing! Here I been waiting for hours, and not a word, not a word, not a single flash!"

The Old Man's voice rose to a high naked falsetto. He glared up at them through the huge panes of the horn-rimmed glasses. The foetal precosity of that terrific, that masterly, that Napoleonic glance was, or would have been, but for their atavism of superstitious solicitude towards things hydrocephalic, annihilative. His bald head trembled. It mottled. It throbbed. It seemed as if it would burst into sweat, shed tears, ooze blood. The blood was there, right under their eyes. They could see it pounding beneath the semi-transparent skin where, like discolorations in some huge unhatched egg, the veins ran over the smooth distensions of that towering brow. That great head fascinated, hypnotized, alarmed them. At any moment such preternatural gravity might speak for itself, might hiss with speech, might reel with thought.

"Hear what?" the Old Man repeated.

"Why—who she is."

"No! Who is she?"

"Why, she's . . ." Old Smut stopped again, overcome.

"What's come over yuh?"

"I ain't got any copy," said Old Smut, galloping through his speech like a runaway horse. "Thought you'd wanta kill the story. Been fixing it up with the boys on the other papers. They'd agreed. Ain't going to play her up a-tall. Not a single word. 'Honor of the Press' got 'em. I told 'em wouldn't none of us get any place 'nless . . . We're going to slam old Manifestor instead."

The Old Man rose to the full dignity of his five feet and one inch. Never had he been more Napoleonic.

"Well, *who in hell is she*?"

"She . . . *she's your wife!* . . ."

His wife—Eleanor! Hell and damnation! . . . So *that* was what ailed her lately—acting up so! . . . Divorce? . . . No, by heck, he wouldn't! . . . A year in Europe, that'd fix it up. He hadn't much use for a woman anyhow, except to have one. . . . Meanwhile . . . Speedily, powerfully, masterfully, the Napoleon of the News made one of those decisions for which he was so famous. . . . Meanwhile—SCOOP!

. . . A *bear*, a *wham* of a story!

He whirled on them. In his shrill voice there was mingled bitter rage, utter astonishment.

"*Kill it! Kill it!*"

He withered, he scorched, he burned, he devastated Old Smut.

"Kill it?" Now there was real grief in his voice. "And—you—call—yourself—a—*newspaper*—man?"

He burned Old Smut to a cinder.

"*Kill it?* . . . What—kill a *scoop*? . . . Kill *nothing!*" . . . Get down there—all of you! Get a move on! Start getting out that story! . . . How many times have I told you boys that not even if your own grandmother . . ."

* * *

As for Inspirationist Himself, Discoverer of Positive Life, Manifestor of Positive Truth, author of the Book of Life, the *Globe*, the Old Man, the staff of alert and corrupt young men, the public and the court united in a solid front and gave him—ten years.

(The End)



The Fatal Step

By William Seagle

NOT the pretensions of the theory of Divine Right and rule by the Grace of God, not the fear of the merciless tax-gatherers, not the love of liberty and the desire of men to be secure in their goods and persons, not the struggles of Church and State, not the innumerable wars of aggrandizement spelled the end of monarchy, but kingship was doomed when the first king permitted himself to put on the three-piece suit of vest, pants, and coat, a linen collar, and a felt hat. . . .



Ghosts

By M. G. Sabel

*THAT part of me you made
Is dead now, buried.
And all my verses are only
Poor ghosts stalking.*

O-O

By Andrew Rogers

IN his youth Peter Peterson was a moralist. But he did not wish to be known as such. He said to himself: "In order that I might not appear what I am I shall not pretend to be wicked. That game is played out. Those who pretend wickedness are famous for being moralists. Therefore I shall proclaim my views as loudly as I can. Everybody will think me a rake."

Everybody said: "Peter Peterson is a moralist of the most ferocious sort."

In his middle age Peter Peterson was a rake. But he did not wish to be known as such. He said to himself: "In order that I might not appear what I am I shall not pretend innocence. Everybody knows that still waters run deep. I shall call myself a rake at every occasion. Nobody will believe me."

Everybody said: "Peter Peterson is a rake of the worst kind."

In his old age Peter Peterson was neither a moralist nor a rake. He wished to be known as a man who believed in the happy medium. "If I tell wicked stories and refuse to join the Association for the Purification of Morals people will say: 'He is a moralist. Only moralists tell wicked stories and refuse to join the A. P. M.' Or they might say 'He is a rake. Only

rakes tell wicked stories and refuse to join the A. P. M.' If I keep silent and join the A. P. M., people might say 'Still waters run deep. He is a rake.' Or 'He is a moralist—has he not joined the A. P. M.?' If I retire to a monastery people might say: 'He is a rake. He has retired from the world because his conscience is too guilty.' Oh they might say: 'He is a moralist. He cannot stand the wickedness of the present generation.'"

While Peter Peterson was turning this thought in his brain as an acrobat turns a hat at the end of a stick, the people said: "Peter Peterson is an old fool!"

On his death-bed Peter Peterson was asking himself anxiously: "What will the people say about me after I am gone?" He died. The people said nothing more of Peter Peterson. His tombstone used to read:

Peter Peterson

1720-1790

May his soul rest in peace

But the rain, the snow, the dust, the air—all worked in unison and erased everything save:

O—O



MISOGYNIST—A man who hates scenes.

Ashes to Ashes

By Nunnally Johnson

I

AT first, occasionally, Ethel Faber had some misgivings as to the propriety of accepting so many and such expensive gifts from another man, but Ralph himself reassured her. Ralph was her husband. Take them, he said, all that were offered.

As pleased as this made her, she suffered, for the briefest of seconds, a twinge of pain that he should with such callousness ignore the opportunity of flattering her with threats of a wallop on the jaw if ever she accepted another token from August Ehler, but it passed so quickly she failed, then, to perceive the real significance of the incident. She gave herself over entirely to the luxury of these tributes which August stood at her elbow each evening. Soon, in the excess of her pleasure, she had forgotten the pain.

The first of August's gifts—she remembered it for a long, long time—had been a quart of gin, low-grade stuff, the same solution of water, juniper juice and alcohol that Ralph bought and drank steadily. August Ehler was at that time virtually at the outset of his career, working in a small way and among a limited clientèle, a far cry indeed from his wealthy and fashionable circle of less than a year later. Boyishly enthusiastic in his ambitions, yet wholly and seriously wrapped up in the fascinating intricacies of his new business, he had engaged first the interest and then the friendship of the Fabers quite as much for the lovable complexity of his personality, at once deeply devout and broadly tolerant, as for the

reliability of his gin and the moderate-ness of his prices. Behind his frank devotion to and reliance on the Gospel, they found a comfort and a feeling of safety which they had been able to discover in no other bootlegger.

They came to trust him with the blind confidence of little children. They would drink, without the faintest hesitation, anything he brought to them—anything. And he, on his part, appreciated their faith and was moved deeply by it. And God willing, he told them many times, they would never regret it.

It became a fond memory to them, the occasion of August's first shy offer of the gin to Ethel.

"Mrs. Faber," he had said, awkwardly ill at ease, looking very much like a tender young curate, "I just brought this extra quart along for you."

He blushed at his own boldness, and sought comfort in a fragment of text from the Book he loved so well: "'Because ye have been with me from the beginning.' Mr. Faber was my first customer, you know." Ethel had looked at the bottle, and then at Ralph, her eyes asking permission to accept, and Ralph had nodded very quickly. With a warm smile she had thanked August, and then deftly extracted the cork with her teeth.

They liked to recall how they had sat down then and there and drunk the quart, round after round, until it was all gone. It was not good gin, although three days old, but it was powerful. Gradually it loosened their tongues; they relaxed; they became friendlier. August, for the most part, limited his

conversation to reiterated claims to perfect control over his thirst.

"I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again," he quoted from the Gospel according to St. John.

After the third drink the hostess dropped all affected restraint.

"Don't be formal," she said to August. "Call me Ethel. Can you pronounce it?"

"I can," he replied, "Ethel."

They congratulated him and took another drink.

"By the way," he added, rising politely, "my name is Ehler—August Ehler—Gus to my friends. Call me Gus."

Ralph extended his hand and the two men shook.

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Ehler," Ralph said. "I'd been intending for some time to ask you your name."

"Gus," Ehler corrected him. "Don't call me Mister—call me Gus. Good ol' Gus Ehler—Honest Gus Ehler. I want you to call me Gus."

"Gus," said Ralph. Ethel said "Gussie!" Ehler laughed heartily and slapped her on the back.

"No hard feelings," he said. "Good ol' Gus Ehler—everybody's friend."

The next drink was the last in the quart. Gaily Ethel upturned the bottle over her own head to show that it was empty.

"Sempty," she explained.

"Salright," Gus replied, and went and got one of Ralph's quarts. They drank the second bottle. . . .

August's business was growing, even then at the start, by leaps and bounds, and soon the gifts to Ethel became mellow and more palatable. The gin gave way to authentic bonded stuff, rye, Bourbon and Scotch, warm and cheery, softening the nerves and senses, casting a golden glow over all the world. Ethel presently dropped the formality of asking permission of Ralph before accepting each of the never-ending sequence of bottles. His nod had grown quicker and quicker. After a time he discontinued his semi-monthly purchase of a

case of gin and drank Ethel's presents.

Eventually, then, the rye and Bourbon were displaced by fancier drinks, rare boozes which had been only names to Ethel. August brought thick black liqueurs from Spain; dynamic concoctions that came in on ships from Russia; mellow brandies and soothing sauternes from France. He brought anisette, sugary and almost imperceptibly sharp; champagne that rang in Ethel's head like wild silver bells on a frosty night; and pot-bellied little bottles of crème de menthe. He gave her rum from Jamaica, which she swigged down like water; Irish whiskey, which upset her stomach; schnapps, which burned her mouth so fiercely that she had to wash it down with a large tumblerful of Scotch. He brought real beer.

Once there was dry Curacao for her. Another time August brought a Mexican favorite, mescal, which gave Ralph a slight touch of delirium tremens. On still another evening, for a lark, they drank gin, for the sake of auld lang syne. Never, though, was the Scotch replaced. Always, even when there were other bottles, Gus stood a sturdy brown bottle at Ethel's elbow, for better than anything else did she love Scotch.

Every evening they spent together, sitting around the large table in the Fabers' dining-room, drinking and singing and crying. Ethel sang little snatches of love ballads, some of them very sad. Ralph joined in on everything. Gus sang hymns.

It was not long before Gus bought a car, a long, low, 12-cylinder machine, with a purple body trimmed in narrow yellow stripes. Then they varied their evenings by driving out, to drink their liquor in the fresh, sweet air of the open country. They were merry little outings, and generally, on the way home, they were in high spirits, as mettlesome and mischievous as school children on a holiday. Ralph and Gus threw empty bottles at farmhouse windows, and Ethel tied a cow's tail to the rear axle once and drove a mile or so down the road before the boys noticed it. They

came home refreshed and hungry and still thirsty.

Always on these outings, Gus noticed, Ethel clung to the bottle of Scotch which he gave her each evening as her own special property. It aroused in him a feeling of tender indulgence, a warm fondness, to note her childish gratitude for it and the fierce determination with which she clutched the bottle by the neck, as a babe, he told himself, clutched its own little bottle of milk. It was the mother instinct in her. He and Ralph drank whatever else they had brought along, sharing only an infrequent round of their exotic beverages with her. Only rarely did they take a single drink from her Scotch.

Two or three times, early in their friendship, Ralph urged Gus to make the party a foursome by bringing along a woman friend. He suggested the names of several, and Gus, plainly embarrassed, rejected them all.

"All these are the beginning of sorrows," he quoted from the Gospel according to St. Matthew. But his eyes rested on Ethel, and she, whenever he could see him, dropped hers. Once she seconded Ralph's suggestion. At the look she saw in Gus's eyes she faltered, her voice broke and, to cover her confusion, she turned the bottle of Scotch up to her lips. When finally she lowered it, she saw the look still there. She never suggested another woman again. She was beginning to understand.

II

BEGINNING to understand? No, she already understood. She realized she did. More interesting was to become aware that she returned this love. She was, for the moment, panic-stricken. It savored of treachery to Ralph. Then she set herself to justifying it. She tried long and hard to convince herself that this new love was right, that Ralph's treatment of her had been such as to alienate her affections, that Gus was a better man, a worthier man, Ralph's superior in every way. And soon, naturally, she was successful.

Greatly relieved at scaling this sentimental barrier, she enjoyed herself with reckoning the score against Ralph. His actions since they had developed Gus as a friend and provider were calculated, consciously or unconsciously, to force her into the bootlegger's arms. That first slight, when he had interposed no objections to her accepting presents from him, other occasions when she had argued, as much with her own conscience as with Ralph, over this same question of propriety, and miscellaneous other incidents she was able to recall all brought Ralph into one aspect: he was exploiting her attractions to line his locker.

Briefly and bluntly she was pleased to find Ralph had been offering Gus her company in return for his liquor. It was as plain as the nose on her face.

She thought of Gus with the greatest tenderness, now that she had disposed of the obstacles to loving him. He was as old as she, perhaps older, and could doubtless drink her under the table five nights out of the seven, and yet she thought of him as a boy, a charming, unspoiled youth. Associating with men of the world every day, doing business with them constantly, it seemed to her that he had been able to retain an amazingly great part of his childish sweetness. She found in his propensity for quoting from the Scripture a residue of an early religious training that had softened and made holy his only poorly concealed love for her. It was, she saw, different, far different, from this practical emotion she had found in Ralph. It was rarer, purer.

Gus never permitted a word of this love to pass his lips, though words could have told nothing his eyes had not already said a thousand times. Perhaps his conscience, a strict conscience, forbade this treachery to a friend, who in addition had been a very good customer. He certainly had all the opportunities he could have wanted, but he never spoke. He only looked, and Ethel understood.

And it was she who touched off this smoldering passion. It was on one of

their drives into the country in quest of fresh air. Indirectly Ralph was responsible. Gus had brought three of the little pot-bellied bottles of *creme-de-menthe*, two bottles of cognac, a quart of absinthe, and the inevitable Scotch, for the evening's entertainment, and when he went out of the house to put the laprobes in the car, Ethel saw Ralph make a surreptitious snatch across the table. The quart of absinthe disappeared. Then he stole out of the room.

Quietly she followed him. He was in the library. As she entered she was just in time to see the last of the absinthe drain through the neck of the bottle into his open mouth. When Gus arrived in answer to her whoops he found Ralph having a convulsion.

Determined that the evening should not be spoiled, they lifted him out of the house and into the car. Gus directed the chauffeur to drive directly out of town. Neither the cold air nor the stimulants they gave him served to revive the stricken man. They made numerous lackadaisical efforts to open his eyes, and then, having failed altogether, they covered his recumbent form with a robe and sat back to enjoy the drive.

Ethel more than half expected some form or other of confession of love then and there. The opportunity was ideal; Ralph was as good as dead. She was positive Gus had not missed the answering light which had come into her eyes. She was certain that he knew his love was returned. But he remained silent. His soft, hurt eyes stared straight ahead. Methodically he lifted a bottle of cognac to his lips again and again, but he did not look around. His body was tense. His free hand gripped the edge of the seat. He seemed to be holding himself together only by a tremendous effort.

Slowly, almost unconsciously, she allowed her hand to slip toward his. There was an electric shock when she touched it that thrilled them both. Startled, she stopped; and then, encouraged by his failure to relieve his

strained nerves by a shriek, she moved her hand again, and closed it over his. His knuckles, that were white with tension, flushed a rosy pink, which crept over his body until it appeared on his neck above his white collar. When, after slowly spreading over his entire surface, he felt that it had at last reached even his feet, he nearly swooned from the sweet excitement.

Then, before he could realize it, she was whispering to him, leaning against his shoulder, pressing her cheek against his. "Gus, Gus!" It was music, precious music to his ears. He closed his eyes, but he loosened his grip on the seat. Carefully, hampered though he was by her caress, he put the cork in the cognac bottle with his teeth, and laid it on the floor. Then he prepared himself to be ready when his self control should break down.

He became conscious that she was pulling at his hand, the while she kept whispering his name. He relaxed, permitted her to do what she would with his hand, and then, when he felt her raising it, he stiffened again. His eyes being already shut, he had no need to shut them ecstatically. He waited. She carried his hand to her lips, and they pressed warm and damp and sticky against each finger. Then she lowered it to her bosom. He caught the little gasp she gave. Then, suddenly, impulsively, she pressed it tight, tight, tight against the bottle of Scotch. With a partly stifled cry he caught her to him. His reserve swept away, all caution abandoned, nothing there but the wild love of a man for a woman, he rained kisses, hot, fierce, passionate kisses, rained them furiously, savagely, on her cheeks, her eyes, her mouth, her chin, her neck, the bottle of Scotch. . . .

III

BEFORE he left her that evening he whispered a promise to return the next morning. She stood before him, a far-away look in her eyes, a pitiful little trickle of whiskey dried on her chin. She did not understand. Gently he took

the empty bottle from her unresisting hand and stood it on the chauffeur's head, and repeated the promise. She melted into his arms and, as Ralph was having another convulsion and paying no heed to anything else, they kissed good night.

She received him the next morning in the dining-room. A smile, half sadness, half pleasure, was on her face as he entered. The room, when she glanced about it, appeared a strange place, one she had not seen ever, or for a long time. But over it hung the fragrance of old, sweet pleasures. Her glance rested on a dent in the floor, where at the end of one of their evenings Ralph had started to gnaw his way to Australia. There was a bent bracket on the chandelier, where she had looped the loop on another occasion. And on the ceiling was a large green spot, where Gus had splashed several dollars' worth of spinach once, saying, "I will not any more eat thereof," attributing it to the Gospel according to St. Luke. But the memories brought sadness, for the night had been spent in thought and prayer, and the conclusion she had reached was not an easy one to carry out.

It was another Gus that appeared before her. The boyish solemnity was gone from his face. In its place was strength, a look of sternness born of determination; there was a glint of exaltation in his eye. She thought suddenly of his true resemblance to one of the apostles. Her head ached.

She met his embrace, clinging to him, her heart overflowing with emotion. Madly he caressed her, and whispered in her ear: "Dear heart, how are you?" She returned the whisper: "Fairly well. How are you?" "Great," he whispered in reply. They unclasped and sat down.

Quickly he cleared the ground for his subject. Where was Ralph? Had she taken her bromo seltzer? Did she remember all? Without waiting for replies he hurried on:

"Ethel, we've got to get out of here. This waiting, this suspense, must end. You must go to Montreal; I'll go to

New Orleans. You must get a divorce—at once. There will be no talk, no gossip, nothing against your character. I'll protect you in every way. But we—"

"Gus, Gus!" Her voice was low and throbbing with anguish. "If only it were possible!"

"But it is, dearest, it is. Another week, a month—"

"No, no, you don't understand. It isn't time, it isn't fear, that prevents it, dear Gus. It is something deeper, something bigger. It is my church."

"I—I don't understand, Ethel."

His faltering voice tore into her heart like a knife, but she steeled herself to do what she had decided was right.

"You forget, dear," she said gently, "that my church does not sanction divorce and remarriage. In the eyes of my church that is sin. And, Gus, would you have me if—"

His eyes blazed as he sprang to his feet.

"Your church!" he shot at her. "Would a good church stand between a woman and the man she loves?"

"August!" She stiffened, her eyes flashed, and instantly he was contrite.

"But Ethel—dearest—don't you see—"

She softened and touched a kiss to his temple.

"I see, dear Gussie, but what else is there to do? I will not, I cannot, go counter to my church. It would not be right."

He must have sensed the note of strength in her voice, for he got to his feet, his face red with conflicting emotions. He reached the buffet in a bound and poured himself a stiff drink. It seemed to calm him. He spoke more rationally.

"I cannot understand a church," he said, "that could be so terrible. I cannot understand one that insists on your staying married to a man who is not your equal in any way, a man whom you no longer love. It cannot be!"

"I should have told you last night," she murmured. "I am not free to love, no matter what sort of a man I have

married. And I can never be free until he is dead—or I."

"Dead!"

"Yes, dead. Not until he is dead. There is no alternative. While he lives I am his. Only death can help me. And he is in such good health."

Gus stood as if transfixed.

"Dead!" he murmured. The word burned into his mind. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," he quoted. And then when he spoke to her again there was a new light, a light of hope in his eyes.

"Dearest," he said, "I have faith. 'The just shall live by faith.' Our love must not die."

"Only death," Ethel repeated softly, "only death can free me."

The bootlegger poured himself another drink. He started back to her side once, and then, on second thought, returned to the buffet and the bottle. His sombre eyes studied her through the dark amber of the liquor. She rose and joined him.

"Here's laughing at you," she toasted him, a forced gayety in her voice.

His eyes held dark and heavy.

"Death," he repeated, but he drank with her.

They stood looking at each other, a strained silence between them. They took another drink. Ethel put her arms around his neck.

"Gus," she said tenderly, "we must be careful. We must take care of ourselves against doing wrong. Perhaps—some day—who can tell—we may belong to each other. But not now, dear. We must cast the thought aside. I have done wrong, I have been a faithless wife, to say these things to you, but I couldn't help it, Gus. I wanted you to know."

He did not speak at once. His thoughts were far away, and bitter. He was thinking of himself. Wealthy, talented, possessed of professional and social position, master of more money than he would ever need for himself alone, he was powerless before this woman's sturdy adherence to her faith. It stirred him. "One of God's good women," he murmured. Other women

could be had, dozens of them, moths ready to flutter to his flame, but—this was the woman he wanted. And finding her, he was helpless. A Methodist himself, he could not understand this objection to divorce.

"Ethel," he said, "you are a good woman, 'the noblest work of God.' Forgive me, dear, if I have offended you."

Her reply was to raise her lips to his. He set the glass down on the buffet and embraced her.

"Continue in prayer," he whispered to her, "and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

An hour later, when Ralph came downstairs, he found Ethel alone, sitting in the window-seat, staring out over the city. Gus had gone. Without turning, she pointed toward the buffet. Without speaking, Ralph poured himself a drink. Without falling, he climbed on top of the buffet and went to sleep.

IV

Gus's thoughts, when he returned to his offices, were in a state of chaos. He spoke sharply to the office-boy in the vestibule. He snapped at the stenographers in the outer office. He was cross to the clerks in the accounting office. He glared at the people waiting for him in the anteroom. He was abrupt to his secretary.

"Get rid of them," he said curtly. "Tell them anything."

For an hour he sat struggling with his emotions. He thought of Ethel, and pity welled in his heart at the idea of her bound to a man she did not love. And yet against Ralph he felt no direct hatred. True, he realized, he was unworthy of her. He had mistreated her. He had robbed her—he had not failed to notice the discontinuance of the semi-monthly purchase of a case of gin or of the avidity with which Ralph seized the bottles he had brought to Ethel. He had ignored these things for her sake. But he had noticed them, and others too: Ralph's habitual failure to pour the first drink for his wife, his

frugality when he did pour for her, the envy in his eyes at the sight of her bottle of Scotch.

"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," he reflected. "And the end of all these things is at hand; be ye sober."

His reverie was at length interrupted by a hesitating knock at the door. The secretary brought word of the presence outside of Antonio Madoni, of the importing firm of Madoni & Feronella.

"Show him in," Gus ordered, shaking his thoughts from him.

Madoni entered, a little Italian with a perpetual smile and a roving, wary eye.

Gus greeted him without enthusiasm. "More excuses, I suppose," he said. "This is the last time. Go on and tell me, the shipment is still delayed. You want me to give you more time. Right?"

Madoni smiled on.

"Ah, Mist' Ehla," he said, "she's a beet late. Whatta you care? You gotta plent' booze. She be in soon-a now. You wanta some gin?"

Gus regarded the Italian coldly.

"I don't sell gin any more, and you know it."

Unabashed the Italian smilingly enumerated the qualities of this new lot.

"Only a leetla beet. You tak-a dees gin. She's al-a-right dees gin she is. She got-a da Gordon labels on."

"Where'd you get it?" Gus asked.

From a friend, a druggist, likewise an Italian. No, he didn't know when it was made. But it had Gordon labels on. Madoni had the highest faith in the manufacturer.

"I gotta da case downstairs," he wheedled. "Mebbe I let you have it for not'in'. Try it. Fine-a stuff I got."

Gus thought it over. "Bring it up," he told him finally, and presently one of Madoni's subordinates lifted it into the office and laid it on the desk. Gus drew the cork from a bottle with his teeth. He poured two glasses.

"Let's see how it goes," he said.

Madoni smilingly pushed the proffered glass back.

"Nev-a touch-a da stuff," he said. "None-a da booze for mine."

Gus smelled his glass. Then he studied the Italian intently. He smelled the drink again, and then the bottle. Finally he poured the two drinks back into the bottle and corked it. He pressed a button and the secretary came in.

"Call a taxi," he said.

Madoni and his subordinates moved to the door. Gus put on his coat and followed them. They shook hands, and the Italians left. When the taxi came Gus sent the secretary down with the case of gin. He followed it shortly. A minute later he and the case of gin were speeding toward Rose Crest Heights.

Ethel did not attempt to conceal her surprise at his early return, and at the sight of the case being brought in she clapped her hands with pleasure; she thought it was Scotch. Gus patted her shoulder. "It's gin," he said tenderly. She pouted charmingly, until he produced a pint flask from each hip pocket. "Scotch," he said. With a little cry of pleasure she pressed them to her heart.

He led her into the dining-room. Ralph still lay asleep on the buffet. Gus glanced at him once, but said nothing. Ethel brought out two glasses and they drained the two pints before speaking.

"Not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done," he murmured.

"Gus—" she began.

"Hush," he commanded, and suddenly she realized there was something ominous about his air, something threatening, menacing. She did not understand it, and it frightened her strangely. He drew her to the divan and then sat down together. She tried to speak again, and again he warned her. She tried to catch his hand; it was clenched and hard. She looked up into his face fearfully and saw that his eyes were fixed on Ralph's still form. He was staring steadily, relentlessly. Involuntarily her eyes followed his.

Then, through the long afternoon, they watched together, neither moving nor speaking. Their eyes did not leave

the inert figure. The ray of sun through the west window lengthened and flattened. At long, dreary intervals a clock struck somewhere—three, four, five o'clock. The room grew dark, and night came. Still they did not move, nor did Ralph.

At five-thirty Ethel, her nerves stretched to the breaking-point, shaking and throbbing and weak in every member, rose and with a little half-hysterical cry rushed across the room to the buffet. Gus rose to restrain her, but she motioned him back. She picked up the heavy, silver-inlaid corkscrew and gouged Ralph's knuckles with its point. His hand relaxed and she snatched the half empty bottle of Scotch from it. With a little moan of pleasure she raised it to her lips, and did not lower it until it was empty. Then, refreshed, she returned to Gus's side.

They took up the vigil again, now in the semi-dark, but it was not long they had to wait. The gouge in the knuckle had aroused Ralph. He stirred once or twice convulsively, shifting his position.

At length, after several unsuccessful efforts, he lifted his head. With bleared, nearly closed eyes he glanced about the room, seeing nothing. Gus and Ethel, still as death, watched him from a darkened angle of the room. Ralph studied the situation for some time, though betraying no particular interest in it. Then he raised himself to his elbow, to his knees, swaying perilously, and finally he gained his feet. He stood straight up on top of the buffet, mumbling to himself. The watchers saw him grope in the air for a moment, and then try to step down the four feet to the floor. He fell, striking head first, and scrambled to his feet, giggling.

"I'm down," they heard him say.

He made his way to the center table, propped himself against it, and from there studied the room again. His roving eyes came to rest on the case of gin. Electrified he reached for it and ripped off the top. Gus drew Ethel closer to him. Their hands clasped. They waited tensely for they knew not what. They

could hear Ralph chortling as he discovered the contents of the case. And he mumbled incoherently as he extracted the cork from a bottle.

Then the mumblings were hushed. In their place came gurgles, long and deep. Finally a hollow one, as he pulled his mouth away. They saw him, silhouetted against the window, set the bottle again on the table. Then he collapsed into a chair. For a moment he seemed comfortable; then his legs began to stiffen. The chair screeched as his writhing body strained in it. His head fell back. His whole body stiffened. There was a blood-chilling rattle in his throat. Then he lay still.

A minute of silence passed. The room was like death. Ethel was half unconscious from the tension, the horror of the unknown. She could only clutch Gus's hand. Then he shook himself loose from her. He rose unsteadily and went over to the chair. He produced a small mirror from his pocket and held it before Ralph's open mouth. He took it to the window and looked at it, after which he went out into the hall.

She heard him take the receiver from the phone. He called a number.

"Is this Madoni? . . . This is Ehler speaking. I've called to let you know I don't think I'll take that consignment after all. . . . Yes, I mean the gin. . . . No, it's not the price; I've just got a hunch it's not all right. . . . Yes, I'll pay for this case. I'll send a check in the morning. Good-by."

"Ethel," he said, coming back into the room and pulling her into his arms, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." He kissed her gently on the top of the head. "And his ways are inscrutable. We, poor sinners, can only accept His mandates as we in our poor way can interpret them. If He saw fit . . . ashes to ashes, dust to dust. It is His will, and of sinners did He say, 'And these shall go into everlasting punishment'—" he pressed her closer—"but the righteous into life everlasting." Are you happy now, dearest?"

She snuggled in his arms with a little purr of contentment.

Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

THE NEW ARISTOCRACY.—It is one of the essentials of a true aristocracy that its members must be beyond the reach of the ordinary law—that they must be permitted to do freely things that are forbidden to the great masses of men. Would it be absurd to argue that Prohibition has laid the foundations of such an aristocracy? The American who buys and drinks sound wines today is just as far removed from the swillers of home-made decoctions as the baron of the Middle Ages was removed from his villeins, and for the same reason.

§ 2

An Observation.—The greatest change that I have witnessed in my time is this: that in the space of ten years the female leg has ceased to be an aphrodisiac. The effects upon human society, I believe, are more profound than the effects of the Great War.

§ 3

American Advertising, IV.—I quote from the current advertisement of the P. F. Collier and Son Company, setting forth the virtues of their Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf of Books:

Two women live in neighboring homes. They are the same age. Their husbands' income are about equal. They seem to have the same chance of social success and happiness.

And yet, one of these women is invited seldom to go out. She belongs to no set or club or society. She is lonely all day long.

The other woman is always the center of a group of friends. Her calendar is full of engagements. She is sought after as a guest and admired as a hostess.

Make her secret your own.

Her secret is very simple. She has learned how to attract people. She has read many things. Her mind is keen and alert, and people feel instinctively that she is worth knowing.

Any woman who knows something of literature and science, of travel and biography, will find herself becoming more and more attractive.

Grammatical elegance aside, what could be sweeter? If you were inviting one of the two women to a party, which one would you invite? If you were invited to a party by the two women, whose invitation would you accept? Which one would you make love to; which one would you marry? I know all sorts and conditions of men—artists, tradesmen, cotillion leaders, policemen, stockbrokers, street-car conductors, college professors, college boys, what not—but I know, in all that grand group, not a single one who would buy a dinner for Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf or feel like holding its hand while the band was playing the flower-maiden music out of "Parsifal."

§ 4

Notes for an Unwritten Autobiography, II.—1. Married women whom I have known and been fond of in other years seem always to be bent upon proving laboriously to me how happy they are.

2. The world is divided into householders and gypsies. I have no other use for the former than to use them to

the advantage of my own pleasure or material profit. They are often estimable and to be respected—and in some ways I envy them—but there is to me in them inevitably a touch of narrowness and romantic sordidness that I do not like. Therefore, I crack the whip of my humor upon them, as a circus ringmaster cracks his upon a troupe of amusing, almost human, and quite pitiable monkeys.

3. I have never had a good friend, nor do I care ever to have one, who was not, or will not be, possessed of a considerable measure of vanity. I admire men who have reason for vanity, and are at no pains to conceal it.

4. When my critics do not know what to say of me, they say that I am a follower of Nietzsche. And why? Simply because I often express my thoughts in the short paragraph form that Nietzsche employed. Other than this there is no more similarity between Nietzsche's doctrine and my own than there is between the doctrines of Darwin and Hagenbeck.

5. Writing is the profession of writers. Imagine a love letter by a stockbroker!

6. There never lived a great artist who was not a profound hedonist.

7. One's new girl is charming in the degree that her charm differs from that of her predecessor.

8. Stonewall Jackson has always impressed me as a great general who did nothing.

9. It was quite impossible for a gentleman to have admired Theodore Roosevelt.

10. Life is full of surprises. But not to a woman over 25, or a man over 30.

11. I do not care to hear what other persons think of me. They may be right.

12. I would rather be president of the United States Steel Corporation than a famous second-rate artist.

13. The most delightful of companions is he who combines the mind of a gentleman with the emotions of a bum.

14. The world is not run equitably. I have got a lot more from it than I know I actually deserve.

15. We all in due time are made to pay the penalty of our virtues.

16. It is foolish to compare Abraham Lincoln with George Washington. Washington is the symbol of a great achievement; Lincoln merely the symbol of a great hope.

17. The great beauty and majesty of the Alps viewed from the Semmering Pass in the mist of a late Autumn evening? The greater beauty and majesty of the Bush Terminal Building viewed from Bryant Park in the mist of a late Autumn evening!

18. There is quite as much accurate observation of human nature in such a play as "The Old Soak" as there is in such a one as "Rosmersholm."

19. No totally abstemious man can be a critic of the arts.

§ 5

Christian Progress.—The villain of modern Christianity is Pontius Pilate; even more than Darwin and Tom Paine he is employed in such Christian communities as Kansas and Arkansas to scare children. Yet there is not the slightest evidence that Jesus Christ regarded him as a bad man or an unjust judge; certainly there is no record that He ever uttered a word of protest against the celebrated *Quod est veritas?* dictum.

§ 6

What Is the Matter with the South: Canto XVII.—From a Knoxville dispatch in the *Chattanooga News* of January 24 last:

Lighting his sermon with superb English, the Rev. Billy Sunday, in his sermon Tuesday afternoon, which was his outstanding effort of the day, clearly demonstrated the fact that he was able to handle the king's English with a great degree of beauty as well as with a disregard for the laws of colleges and universities. His sermon on "Fifty-Fifty" was one which will long be remembered by the people of Knoxville.

Before a huge gathering Mr. Sunday spoke in wonderful terms of the great eternity. He said:

"The world will grow old and die; the stars will burn out in their sockets and

expire; the sun, like a spark, will flash and then go out forever. The winds will utter their last whisper; the ocean will utter its last groan; but you and I will live on after the mountain peaks, mighty to enjoy, mighty to love, mighty to hate and mighty to soar and sink. All those who through Jesus Christ reach the land of glory will never be disturbed. There will be none to dispute their home. They will reign forever."

Thus he spoke and many other flowing sentences stretched away with a prophetic sweetness which opened the eyes of those who had never heard Rev. Sunday in such a sermon.

§ 7

The Russian Drama.—Extracts from the program synopsis of Tchekhoff's "The Three Sisters," as lately performed by the Moscow Art Theatre in New York:

"Andrei muses on his smothered ambitions . . . Masha confesses her dissatisfaction with her married life . . . Vershinin tells of his difficulties with his unbalanced wife . . . Irina is dissatisfied with her work and worried over Andrei's losses at cards . . . They engage in a philosophic discussion concerning the meaning of existence . . . Vershinin's philosophizing is interrupted by a letter announcing that his wife has poisoned herself again . . . Masha irritably interrupts Irina's game and Tuzenbach crosses words with Solyony . . . Solyony engages in a quibbling argument with Tchebutikin and then with Andrei leaves in a huff . . . Natasha returns to say that the musicians have been dismissed owing to Bobby, her child's, illness and the party breaks up . . . Eager to escape from his wife, Andrei leads Tchebutikin out through the kitchen . . . Irina repulses Solyony . . . Olga is weary from her day's work; Vershinin reports that his wife sent for him to frighten him; and Kuligin is dejected . . . As Irina is left alone, she gives vent to her heartache . . . A fire in the town wipes out a whole district and throws many people on the charity of others . . . Natasha complains to Olga about Anfisa, insisting angrily that the old nurse is worthless and must be dismissed . . . Kuligin reports that Tchebutikin is drunk and on his way upstairs. Tchebutikin enters and muses on the insincerity and pettiness of his life. He drops and breaks a porcelain clock and to justify himself philosophizes on the unreality of existence . . . Enter Fedotik to tell of his complete loss in the fire, followed by Solyony, jealous of Tuzenbach . . . Masha's dissatisfaction with Kuligin is disclosed . . . The three sisters, Olga, Masha and Irina, deplore

Andrei's lost ambitions, his wife's unfaithfulness, the futility of their several existences, and the fading dream of Moscow . . . Andrei has a revulsion . . . Andrei breaks down . . . Olga and Irina, left alone, face with despair the rumor that the brigade is to be transferred . . . Irina fears something ominous in the air . . . Masha approaches, restraining with difficulty the sorrow in her heart . . . Masha and Andrei are concerned with the drabness of their future . . . Andrei deplores the dull, gray, apathetic life, its hypocrisies and deceptions . . . Kuligin tries to comfort his distressed and lonely wife . . . Natasha, complaining as usual, makes plans for reorganizing the household . . . At Irina's cry, Tchebutikin admits that the Baron has been killed . . . Left alone, the three sisters face their dismal future, robbed each of her individual dream, and Olga voices the feelings of them all: ". . . It seems that in a little while we shall know why we are living, why we are suffering. If only we knew! If only we knew!"

Curtain.

§ 8

The Month's Award.—*Répétition Générale's* grand prix 3½ x 4¾-foot custard pie goes this month for the second time to the American Radiator Company of New York and Chicago for its advertisement appearing in the current public prints. This month's advertisement is embellished with a reproduction of Herbert Paus' portrait of Robert E. Lee, is headed "American Ideals," and reads as follows:

Robert E. Lee. "I have no other ambition," he said, "than to serve in any capacity to which the authorities assign me."

Because of that spirit of self-effacing service, Robert E. Lee will always be to Americans a great ideal.

To such self-effacing service this Company dedicated its products in selecting for them the names "American" and "Ideal" . . .

§ 9

The Missing Herodoti.—In no department, save perhaps that of the English language and literature, is the donkeyish incompetence of the American *Gelehrten* more obvious than in that of history. Each of the other countries engaged in the late war, and particularly England and Germany, has begun to

produce a copious literature about it, and included in that literature are a number of acute historical studies. But in the United States the professional historians appear to be producing nothing but drivel. It is difficult, indeed, to think of anything they have printed, save maybe an essay or two by Fay, of Smith College, that is of any more historical weight or dignity than the pamphlets printed by the Creel Press Bureau during the war. It seems to take a long while to debamboozle a pedagogue. Most of these solemn vacuums actually worked for Creel during the war, and very few of them have got over it. Their writings, in the main, are ignorant, unintelligent and lying. The only creditable efforts at serious history lately made in the Republic have been made by such amateurs as Judge Bausman and Mr. Turner. Both Bausman and Turner show the inevitable defects of the neophyte and dilettante, but each, at least, seems to understand clearly the difference between what occurred officially and what occurred actually. Very few university professors of history in America have ever grasped that elementary distinction. Nearly all of them are mere compilers of dubious documents.

I marvel that so few young Americans of leisure and literary ambition devote themselves to historical writing. The business is surely quite as interesting as that of writing plays or novels, and obviously far more important and satisfying than that of writing poetry or criticism. Perhaps the youngsters are dissuaded from entering the field by contact with the high-grade morons who profess history in the universities. Observing that the gentlemen told off to introduce them to the science are without sense, they conclude inaccurately that the science itself is equally hollow. That is a bad doctrine to get about. History, despite Henry Ford, is not bunk. On the contrary, there is always a kernel of hard fact beneath its husks of speculation and mendacity, and the shucking of that kernel is not only

an extremely engrossing diversion, but also a public act of the highest value. American history, in particular, needs such a critical working over. Prof. Dr. Beard and other such iconoclasts have begun to prod into the history of the early years of the Republic, but their work is very far from done—and, meanwhile, the history of the later years is mauled and debauched by half-wits or neglected altogether.

§ 10

Studies in American Boobology, No. 1.—Current advertisement of the firm of Ching Ling Foo, 538 South Clark Street, Chicago, Ill.:

CHINESE GOOD LUCK RING

This Mystic Chinese Symbol of Good Luck, Health, Happiness and Long Life has been looked upon with the deepest reverence by the Chinese for centuries. Their belief in its charm and mystic powers is as firm as their religious convictions. It is reputed by them to be almost uncanny in its power to bring Good Luck, Riches, Success in Love, Health and Happiness to the wearer. Amazing stories of good fortune are told by prominent men and women wearers of this Chinese Good Luck Ring.

BRINGS FANNY BRICE, "ZIGFIELD FOLLIES" STAR,
\$2,000.00 IN 48 HOURS

This famous stage beauty and popular idol says, "Forty-eight hours after I put on my Chinese Good Luck Ring I received a check for \$2,000.00. It was an entirely unexpected present. I call it the best of luck." A prominent Wall Street broker says this ring has made him a steady winner at bridge whist when all his life before he had been a consistent loser. The Chinese Good Luck Ring is the fad of the hour in fashionable New York and Chicago society. Worn by rich and poor alike. Millions sold in the cities. Successful business men have given these rings to customers and friends with most satisfactory results. An actor who had been out of work over a year signed a contract three days after he put his ring on. A mechanic out of work for three months secured a job the next day. A salesman reports that his firm presented him an automobile within a week after he bought his ring. Every man, woman and child should have one. Get your Chinese Good Luck Ring at once, or send one to some friend who has been unfortunate. Its constant reminder of your cherished wish that all the good things of life may be theirs, makes it a most acceptable gift.

Don't send a penny. Just your name, address and ring size. We will send you a solid Sterling Silver Chinese Good Luck Ring at once by prepaid parcel post. When you receive the ring send us \$1.50 plus a few pennies postage charge. Then wear the ring for ten days and if it does not bring you the best of luck, increased health and happiness, or you are in any way dissatisfied, return the ring to us and your \$1.50 will be promptly refunded.

§ 11

The Ascent of Man.—Long ago I proposed the application of Haeckel's biogenetic law—to wit, that the history of the individual rehearses the history of the species—to the domain of human ideas. So applied, it leads to some superficially startling but probably quite sound conclusions, for example, that an adult poet is simply an individual in a state of arrested development—in brief, a sort of moron. Just as all of us, *in utero*, pass through a stage in which we are tadpoles, and almost indistinguishable from the tadpoles which afterward become frogs, so all of us pass through a stage, in our nonage, when we are poets. A youth of 17 who is not a poet is simply an ass: his development has been arrested even anterior to the stage of the intellectual tadpole. But a man of 50 who still writes poetry is either an unfortunate who has never developed, intellectually, beyond his teens, or a conscious buffoon who pretends to be something that he isn't—something far younger and juicier than he actually is,—just as the late Richard Mansfield, in Schiller's play, pretended by the use of a falsetto voice and grease-paint pimples to be the 18-year-old Don Carlos. Something else, of course, may enter into it. The buffoonery may be partly conscious and deliberate, and partly Freudian. Many an ageing man keeps on writing poetry simply because it gives him the illusion that he is still young. For the same reason, perhaps, he plays lawn tennis, wears green neckties, and tries to convince himself that he is in love.

It is my firm conviction that no nor-

mal man ever fell in love, within the ordinary meaning of the term, after the age of 30. He may, at 40, pursue the female of his species with great assiduity, and he may, at 50, 60 or even 70, "woo" and marry a fair one in due form of law, but the impulse that moves him to these follies is never the complex of illusions and hallucinations that poets describe as love. This complex is quite natural to all males between adolescence and the age of, say, 25, when the kidneys begin to disintegrate. For a youth to reach 21 without having fallen in love in an abject and preposterous manner would be for doubts to be raised as to his normalcy. But if he does it after his wisdom teeth are cut, it is no more than a sign that they have been cut in vain—that he is still in his teens, whatever his biological and legal age. Love, so-called, is based upon a view of women that is impossible to any man who has had any experience of them. Such a man may, to the end of his life, enjoy their society vastly, and even respect them and admire them, but, however much he respects and admires them, he nevertheless sees them more or less clearly, and seeing them clearly is fatal to the true romance. Find a man of 40 who heaves and moans over a woman in the manner of a poet and you will behold either a moron who ceased to develop at 24 or thereabout, or a fraud who has his eye on the lands, tenements and hereditaments of the lady's deceased first husband. Or upon her talents as nurse, cook, amanuensis and audience. This, no doubt, is what George Bernard Shaw meant when he said that every man over 40 is a scoundrel.

As I say, my suggestion has not been adopted by psychologists, who, in the main, are a very conservative and unimaginative body of men. If they applied the biogenetic law in the field of religion they might make some interesting observations. The chances are, indeed, that religion belongs exclusively to a very early stage of human development, and that its rapid decay in the

world since the Reformation is evidence of genuine progress. Reduced to its essence, every religion is simply the doctrine that there are higher powers which take an interest in the affairs of men, and not infrequently intervene in them. This doctrine is not purely romantic and *a priori*; it is based upon what is regarded by its subscribers as objective evidence. But it must be plain that that evidence tends to go to pieces as human knowledge widens—that it appears massive and impressive in direct proportion as the individual impressed is ignorant. A few hundred years ago practically every phenomenon of nature was ascribed to superhuman intervention. The plague, for example, was caused by God's anger. So was war. So was lightning. Today no enlightened man believes anything of the kind. All these phenomena are seen to be but links in an endless chain of causation, and it is understood that, given a certain quite intelligible and usually inevitable combination of causes, they will appear infallibly as effects. Thus religion gradually loses its old authority, and becomes no more than a sentimentality. An enlightened man's view of it is almost indistinguishable from his view of the Spirit of 1776, the Henty books, and the rosewood casket containing his grandmother's false teeth.

Such a man is not "dead" to religion. He was not born with a congenital inaptitude for it. He has simply outgrown it, as he has outgrown poetry, Socialism and love. At adolescence practically all individuals have attacks of piety, but that is only saying that their powers of perception, at that age, outrun their knowledge. They observe the phenomenon, but cannot account for it. Later on, unless their development is arrested, they gradually emerge from that romantic and spookish fog, just as they emerge from the hallucinations of poetry and love. I speak here, of course, of individuals capable of education—always a small minority. If, as the Army tests of conscripts showed,

nearly 50% of American adult males never get beyond the mental development of a 12-year-old child, then it must be obvious that a much smaller number get beyond the mental development of a youth at the end of his teens. I put that number, at a venture, at 5%. The remaining 95% never quite free themselves from religious ideas. They may no longer believe that it is an act of God every time an individual catches a cold, or sprains his ankle, or cuts himself shaving, but they are pretty sure to see some trace of divine intervention in it if he is struck by lightning, or hanged, or afflicted with leprosy or syphilis. That God causes wars has been believed by all the Presidents of the United States, save Grover Cleveland, since Jefferson's time. During the late war the then President actually set aside a day for praying to God to stop what He had started as soon as possible, and on favorable terms. This was not done, remember, by a voodoo man in the Congo forest, but by a sound Presbyterian, a Ph.D. of Johns Hopkins University, and the best-dressed professor ever seen at Princeton.

I have said that all religions are based on this notion that there are higher powers which observe all the doings of man, and often take a hand in them. It should be added that a corollary is almost always appended, to the effect that these higher powers pronounce ethical judgments upon human acts, and are themselves animated by a lofty and impeccable morality. Most religions, of course, also embrace the concept of higher powers that are not benign, but malignant—that is, they posit the existence of demons as well as of gods. But there are very few in which the demons are regarded as superior to the gods, or even as their full equals. The great majority of creeds, East and West, savage and so-called civilized, put the gods far above the demons, and teach that the gods always wish the good of man, and that man's virtues run in direct ratio to his obedience to their desires. That is, they are all based

upon the doctrine of what is called the goodness of God. This is true pre-eminently of the chief oriental faiths: Buddhism, Brahminism and Confucianism. It is true even of Christianity, despite its luxuriant demonology. No genuine Christian can believe that God ever deliberately and wantonly injures him, or could conceivably wish him ill. The slings and arrows of God, he believes, are brought down upon him by his own ignorance and viciousness. He thinks that if he could be like God he would be perfect.

This doctrine of the goodness of God, it seems to me, is no more, at bottom, than an evidence of arrested intellectual development. It does not fit into what we know of the nature and operations of the cosmos today; it is a survival from a day of universal ignorance. That it is still given credit in the Far East is not surprising, for the intellectual development of the Far East, despite all the nonsense that is talked about Indian and Chinese "philosophy," is really no further advanced than that of Europe was in the time of St. Louis. The most profound Hindoo or Chinese "philosopher" believes, as objective facts, things that would make even the Hon. Cal Coolidge snicker, and so his "philosophy" is chiefly worthless, as was that of the Greeks. The Greeks sometimes guessed right, just as the swamis and yoghis of Los Angeles sometimes guess right today, but in the main their speculations, being based upon false observations, were valueless, and no one would pay any attention to them today if it were not for the advertising they get from theologians, who find them to their taste, and professional "philosophers," who make a living trying to teach them to sophomores. But if the belief in the goodness of God is natural to misinformed orientals, as it was natural to the singularly ignorant Greeks, it is certainly *not* natural to the enlightened races of the West today, for all their science is simply a great massing of proofs that God, if He exists, is neither good nor bad, but simply indif-

ferent—an infinite Force carrying on the operation of infinite processes without the slightest regard, either one way or the other, for the comfort, safety and happiness of man.

Why, then, does this belief survive? Largely, I am convinced, because it is supported by another hoary relic from the adolescence of the race, to wit, the weakness for poetry. The Jews fastened their religion upon the western world, not because it was more reasonable than the religions of their contemporaries—as a matter of fact, it was vastly less reasonable than many of them,—but because it was far more poetical. The poetry in it was what fetched the decaying Romans, and after them the barbarians of the North; not the so-called Christian evidences. For the Jews were poets of a truly colossal eloquence, and they put their fundamental superstitions into dithyrambs of such compelling loveliness that they disarmed the common sense even of skeptical Romans, and so knocked out all other contemporary religions, many of which were in far closer accord with what was then known of the true operations of the universe. To this day no better poetry has ever been written. It is so powerful in its effects that even men who reject its content in toto are more or less susceptible to it. One hesitates, on purely æsthetic grounds, to flout it; however dubious it may be in doctrine, it is nevertheless almost perfect in form, and so even the most violent atheist tends to respect it, just as he respects a beautiful but deadly toadstool. For no man, of course, ever quite gets over poetry. He may seem to have recovered from it, just as he may seem to have recovered from the measles of his school-days, but exact observation teaches us that no such recovery is ever quite perfect: there always remains a scar, a weakness and a memory.

Now, there is reason for maintaining that the taste for poetry, in the process of human development, marks a stage measurably later than the stage of religion. Savages so little cultured that

they know no more of poetry than a cow have elaborate and often very ingenious theologies. If this be true, then it follows that the individual, as he rehearses the life of the species, is apt to carry his taste for poetry further along than he carries his religion—that if his development is arrested at any stage before complete intellectual maturity that arrest is far more likely to leave him with poetical hallucinations than it is to leave him with religious hallucinations. Thus, taking men in the mass, there are many more natural victims of the former than of the latter—and here is where the talent of the ancient Jews does its execution. That is to say, it holds countless thousands to the faith who are actually against the faith: what hamstrings and halts them is their weakness for poetry. Put into plain words, the articles of the faith would revolt them, but intoned as poetry they still work their old magic. This fact, no doubt, explains the great growth of ritualism in an age of skepticism. Almost every day theology gets another blow from science; so badly has it been battered, indeed, that educated men now give it little more credit than they give to witchcraft. But the poetry remains, and it is still powerful enough to hold the allegiance of millions. More, I incline to think that it will be powerful enough forevermore. Soon or late the

last surviving theological superstition will be laid by science. But while that business is going on religion will be growing more and more ritualistic, and so, when the final catastrophe comes, it will survive as poetry, as the history of Greece has survived.

In view of all this, I am convinced that the Christian church, as a practical organization, is quite safe from any danger of extinction, despite the rapid growth of agnosticism. The religion it merchants is full of palpable absurdities; many other religions are far more plausible and scientific. But all of these religions contain the fatal defect that they appeal primarily to the reason. Christianity will survive because it appeals to the sense of poetry—to what, in men of arrested development, which is to say, average men, passes for the instinct to seek and know beauty.

§ 12

The Higher Learning in America.—
From *Printers' Ink* for January 18, last,
page 44:

M. F. Hilfinger, vice-president of the A. E. Nettleton Shoe Company, Syracuse, speaking before the Greater Buffalo Advertising Club, declared that the new University of Buffalo will be the greatest advertising asset the city has. He said that in his city it was estimated that Syracuse University brought at least \$5,000,000 worth of business to that city.



A Mood

By Elizabeth Benneche Petersen

BLUE day . . . golden day,
Pass me by.
I crave the gray,
Soft shadows in the sky.

Other fears . . . other years
Come again.
I feel the tears
In the falling rain.



Advice to Young Men

By Arthur Eloesser

I

DON'T be afraid of clever women. There is not much difference between them and the other kind.

II

A woman will forgive vindictiveness, brutality and contempt. But she will never forgive the man who shows that he has no designs on her.

III

Before plunging into marriage ask yourself if you will be able to go on talking for thirty or forty years about things that don't interest you in the slightest.

IV

You are lost when you cease to believe that you are yourself your own best company. And you are lost when your wife begins to believe that she is hers.

V

Never trust a man who can't keep a secret. And never trust a woman who can.

VI

Women always care too little, or too much, or at the wrong time.

VII

A woman's love easily passes into tragedy—and a man's into comedy.

VIII

There are women in whom youth, like an incurable disease, rages unto death.

IX

The loving woman is a trial; the loved one, a delight.

X

The man who has grown too lazy to be gallant calls his sweetheart his pal.

XI

Is it possible to love a woman in whom one can't discover a single grain of nonsense?

XII

Beware of the woman who is efficient in love. Her love amounts to a declaration of war.

XIII

At twenty: "She is the only woman in the world!" At thirty: "She is more beautiful than any other!" At forty: "I love her still!" At fifty: "What on earth have I been drinking!"



Truant

By Abigail Cresson

I'M tricked by daisies, fooled by stars,
Led endlessly astray
By trees that blossom pink and white
Along some country way.

In winter I'm dependable
But never trust me quite
When once spring turns her face this way
And April comes in sight.

All down the blue and golden months,
Please put no faith in me,
For I am fickle as the wind
And changing as the sea;

And I might spend a whole day long
In following a bird,
Or listening beside a brook
To catch one liquid word.

For I am tricked by loveliness,
By many wondrous things,
That call and beckon here and there
Or brush me with their wings.

A Colored Crayon for Charlie

By Mary Ellen O'Neil

I

THOUGH in my sketch book of people I confine myself for the most part to black and white, yet I invariably use a colored crayon for Charlie. Because of his blond, blithe atmosphere. Because of his neckties and waistcoats. Because of his gaudy soul that was a moth and hovered forever about the festive candle. The trick is to chalk him in a few bright lines, to achieve, if possible, that effect of carelessness, art concealing art, that is the most laborious of tasks.

Several pages are required for his delineation, innumerable poses, one more elegant than the last, yet each true and essential. But it can hardly be gainsaid that Charlie is most Charlie when playing the rôle of guest and god to Mrs. Valentine Mallerby. Here his fifty years are in no wise traitorous; they speak only to his advantage. He would not look a day younger, he would not forego credit for one of those days that has gone to his mellowing. He would prefer that people should forget he was ever in any sense an undergraduate, or a young man not stuffed with opinions, or a child bawling for nourishment. He is culture's product, polished whichever way you turn him, and so far removed from all things banal or vulgar, obvious or domestic, that he stands clear of most human associations. One meets him only on the plane of the most delightful social intercourse, during one's exquisite hours.

His lessening yellow hair is brushed and pommaded vigorously into opinion-

ated points, his mustaches flare with airy nonchalance. About them and the jutting triangle of bearded chin is something acute and articulate: they speak as it were, when he is silent and say the most distinguished and arresting things. His utterances are farther forward than his mouth. Likewise his eyebrows spurt with vitality and beneath them each eye is a critic. You hear his voice and you instinctively know what pronunciation it will give to such words as "extraordinary," "necessary," and "military."

His evening clothes indefinably suggest diplomatic circles. The black ribbon dangling down his shirt front causes strangers, who have no idea how simply they have been acted upon, to revere him. The fable of his distinction is a universal one and faithfully believed by her without whom there could be no machine. She is rich and a great lady, one pales beneath her heavy obligations and stifling prestige. By the set of her wistful mouth, the anxiety of her eyes, even the blue-veined delicacy of her hands one is reminded of a person out of a sick-bed. Yet she is never ill. She is undeniably the most successful hostess in a town noted for social successes. The curious thing about her is her evident reluctance for the rôle . . . like royalty taking a hand, a royal lady enfeebled by the stress of government. Few, however, suspect that she is in reality a rather stupid and very sweet-natured woman. Her cleverness is never more than an accident; she uses silence to great effect—it passes as profundity. In some adroit way she has made Charlie her

representative so that half the time his polished utterances are reported as her own.

Yet there has never been gossip, never the slightest little ripple. Because of Mrs. Mallerby's austere purity, her famous charities and the exciting dullness of her parties people positively clamor to attend and be bored. And there is to be found such a sifted assortment of gentry, to be heard such thin floatings of music or musical opinion! And always Charlie, the pseudo-host, bristlingly animated over refined, minute particles of opinion; Charlie alarmingly contentious in his brilliant way, whipping the air in a conclusive gesture or taking a running leap into French or Italian; Charlie seized with a gay epigram! His gymnastic voice rises at intervals with such phrases as, "Damrosch once said to me . . .", "As Paderewski remarked when we last met in Poland . . ." "My dear friend, Eleanora Duse. . . ." He speaks respectfully of his "voice" but wisely refrains from singing, of his compositions which go unheard. His book, "Porticoes of Paris," is hanging fire with a London publisher. He is always being urged to join such and such an archæological expedition. His art education has been thorough, his musical education a thing to marvel over. He has read every noteworthy writer in the original, both classical and modern, has divined and acclaimed genius in embryo; he has always information to contravene current opinion.

His enchanted audiences accept him as a gentleman of easy means and assured elegance. Even his friend, Mrs. Valentine Mallerby, has stopped short of wondering what the source of his income may be nor dared to doubt that it is an adequate one. One cannot be poor and move carelessly among the terribly rich. . . . Yet that is exactly what our Charlie had had the temerity to do. Before becoming a Cosmopolite he was a New Englander and speaks now and then lightly of his "native heath" and "ancestral acres." He

flashes the vignette of elm-shaded lawns, fireside chairs and anti-macassars.

But journey to the town of his boyhood and inquire for a family of Fullertons and you will hear, "There was such a family but they've all died out. . . ." Poor Charlie cannot convince the townspeople to the contrary. He is the prophet, forlorn in his country. Save for the very tolerant, they take little account of him when he comes pompously back from Palestine or the Lord-knows-where and litters the station platform with his outlandish luggage. And when he has crawled into his three obscure rooms in a "quaint" part of the town he is as good as swallowed. There are, of course, highlights, moments. One is when on his daily constitutional to town, "the village" he calls it, he wears a short Alpine cape, high leather leggings and a violent plaid waistcoat and is nearly mobbed in the dry goods store.

"Now listen!" he comes out bristlingly at the giggling salesgirls leaning over the counter for a better view of him and the rude, staring shoppers. "You are displaying deplorable ignorance. This costume is both sensible and appropriate to the weather as you would know if you knew anything at all."

Yet he is only half incensed. One part of him enjoys the sensation he has created.

But later, on the way home, something of confidence oozes. He wonders, with a catch of pathos, if he is, after all, the incorrigible nincompoop they think him, if it would not be better for his soul's ease to submit to the narrow standards of his townspeople. But his ego flames up within him, instinctively rejecting, nursing its vanity, remembering the laurels it has elsewhere attained. Abroad he is in his element. There poverty may be respectable, respected even; there are all kinds of fascinating and courtly people who suffer from the same embarrassment, or rather do not suffer but pool their chances with a gay camaraderie. The dingy *pension* gives upon a square where one has a meal

of donkey meat and spaghetti, coarse bread and wine for a trifle over a lire, conversant the while with some fellow savant or enthusiast.

But here. Catch him in preparation for one of his famous visits to the house of Mrs. Mallerby. The small rooms are full of steam, Charlie in a bath robe busy with his wardrobe plus a flat iron. There is everything about him from oil sketches and shapes in Majolica to the remains of his breakfast, a mere cup of coffee and a roll in the Continental style. A step is heard on the outer stair and he rushes to the door, leaving the flat iron where it will do the most good. The milkman. The creature has bounded up, thumped something on the floor, and is scurrying down again when Charlie's irritated but cultured voice overtakes him.

"See here, my good fellow, not so fast. I wish a word with you." He pronounced it "w-a-r-d."

"Late a'lready," jerks the voice from the abyss.

"I'm sure that's no concern of mine. I want to tell you not—now listen closely, m'man, *not* to leave any milk while I'm away. I shall certainly not pay for it if you do."

"Oh, so you're goin' away, eh?" Sound of a head being scratched. "Wall, then what about settlin' for the las' milk bill?" The feet come resolutely up the stairs.

"The last milk bill, ahem." Bother the fellow!

"I'll make that right with you when I return."

"Return, eh? How do I know you ever will return?"

"Well, really," rages Charlie in his soul. For blighting insult this is a killer. And the Fullertons helped found the town, founded it, by Jove, for such ungrateful bounders. He holds his temper.

"I give you my ward," he promises naively, and mops his damp brow.

He looks very odd to the milkman, his ruffled, ungroomed head emerging like that of some tropical bird from the ruff-like collar of his bath robe

which happens to be a cast-off monk's habit he has come by in his wanderings. "I give you my ward as a gentleman."

The fellow grins up at him doubtfully.

"How'd I know you air a gentleman? An' anyhow gentlemen don't weigh with me. There's them that pays prompt and easy, an'—an' there's the other kind. No more."

"Bother, I'm in a tearing rush, and it's most inconvenient—*most* inconvenient."

He makes a hasty calculation. His calculations are ever to a hair's breadth. None but a born mathematician would dare venture on a journey so financially figured to a penny, almost to a fraction of a cent. Yet somehow he sails by. He gets where he wants to go and makes a proper appearance. Now then, he had intended presenting his hostess with a box of roses, the curly blond kind. But if he pays the milk bill—He casts about for a solution. Possibly he could still afford carnations. No, bourgeois flowers, and expensive at that. . . . There's a thing called coreopsis—quite common. He rejects it with hauteur. He'll take her instead one of his treasured small etchings, those inimitable bits of Paris done by his friend Paul Carlet. A pity, but a gentleman must look to his obligations. He pays the milk bill. He rushes back to his ironing. The flat iron has been left too long and burned a ridge-like gash in the top of his only pair of afternoon trousers. Damn! But no matter. The portion damaged will come under his coat. He packs his bags. He gets them all aboard a trolley. He is flurried and a wee bit tired, out of character.

But at the railway station, after the kit-bags have been checked, a tremendous sense of well-being overtakes him. He looks and feels distinctive. His overcoat, mellowed by fifteen years of ocean travel and English fogs, maintains its pristine air of jauntiness; he has a French novel under his arm. He drifts about before train time, smoking

a cigarette in a beautiful onyx holder inlaid with diamonds, the gift of his old friend, Prince Popoloff. He has a flair for riding on trains and appearing interested and comfortable. Little by little the disagreeable events of the day are dismissed from his mind, which furnishes itself pleasantly with anticipation of the next fortnight.

Like a salamander he eases and stretches himself in the divine sunlight which already casts its oblique ray upon him. He can afford now to laugh at his discomfort in his home town. . . . The simple townspeople do not know what a reception he is accorded elsewhere; they know only that he has committed the deadly sin—lived upon inherited money, a pittance at that. Well, what of it? And what if his tastes do lead him to seek an affluent society? Does he not pay his way in coin of charm?

II

AND now it is evening, or to change the tense, came an evening of Charlie's arrival different from the many arrivals that preceded it. Was he getting old, or unsure of his established welcome in the house of Mrs. Mallerby that it seemed to him more than ordinarily beautiful and satisfactory, like one entering a palace of enchantment? Or had the jibes of the milkman gone deep? He did not know. He knew only that the very face of the butler, old and benign, was in some way marvelous to behold, like a face from a freize of prophets.

Out-of-doors was bleak but Mrs. Mallerby's house enfolded one in a scented warmth difficult to describe. The carpet of the stair was thick—everywhere glimpses of ordered luxury cunningly contrived to appear simple—everywhere the gracious glow of hearth-fires. He felt an enfeebled sort of gladness and humility which was the exact opposite of the spirit he usually brought to his visits. He thought how good she was to have him and give him always the same little suite of rooms, very neat and beguiling in their

arrangement. He felt himself taken back to, made a part of the traditional elegance which it was his curse to covet. His eyes smarted fiercely, but he dashed the tears away with the back of one happy hand and rummaging in the old accustomed box for cigarettes, he smoked one as a preliminary to dressing. He was conscientiously determined to make his hostess's dinner a success.

And a success it was, from the moment when Charlie greeted the dear woman in her drawing-room to the suddenly quiet interim when all the guests not staying in the house had gone home. The others were playing bridge in the far library. Charlie and Gertrude Mallerby stood in the dim-lighted lesser drawing-room, like ghost figures in the haze of remaining cigarette smoke which, eddying above a peacock rug, looked like mist over a lush valley. Strange the sudden, almost calamitous stillness that succeeds many voices. They have been there so long that the atmosphere still vibrates. And one's own voice which has mingled valiantly to the last, finds itself curiously lost for employment.

Yet the release from tension is great and unmistakable. The very brain seems to fling itself down among cushions in a child-like fatigue and abandon. Mrs. Mallerby looked at Charlie, who had exploded all his epigrams and was resting fallow.

Charlie looked at Mrs. Mallerby whose weariness became her. Her lips barely moved, smiling round the words.

"Let's sit. . . ."

They did so, sinking with the frankness of old friends, down among the pillows of a small divan for two that complemented the fire. She was a woman who, whatever graces she might lack, knew the secret of repose, and Charlie, conscious that in the exertion of his talents he had been a bit hectic, was thankful for her mood. He was glad not to talk but to give himself up to the pleasure of his surroundings, gradually to become more and more aware of her shapely head thrown back

against a cushion, of the restful lines of her shoulders and arms that flowed in perfect symmetry.

He realized for the first time with something of a jolt that in her conservative manner of dressing she had obscured her youth. The very coiffure which she affected was prim and out of date. She looked and acted as a middle-aged queen might look and act, abject to please her kingdom. Yet given a becoming light and a moment off-guard and she was feminine, soft and approachable.

Charlie's heart quickened and stood still like a frightened horse that has not decided whether it will jump or remain planted. He had never fallen in love. Even as a young man he had been so old in intellect and sophistication that he had seen it in damaging perspective—never nearer. He had always said that he considered it a charming idea. He had even written love sonnets that were marvels for form. But his inherent self-sufficiency had placed a barrier in the way of surrender. He wondered tempestuously, his eyes fastened on the porcelain lobes of her ears. At last it was as though his concentration drew a long sigh from her.

"Thanks to you," she said, "it was a perfect evening—really perfect. Charlie, whatever should I do without you? I have come to depend upon you more and more."

There was a slight unevenness, almost a tremor in her voice. "You are really a great man—a very great force."

In substance she had often said the same thing before and Charlie had accepted the monstrous sweetmeat, closed upon it, digested it as his due. But tonight, his mortification fresh and tortuous, all alive to her sweetness and womanliness, he could not bear to play the paragon. Here she was credulous to make a great man of him when he was in reality a—well, what was he, bluntly speaking? A dilettante and worse, a pompous parasite with hardly a shilling in his jeans, who went about patronizing people who were his superiors, honest people like Mrs. Maller-

by whose minds were too healthy to suspect him.

"Don't," he said suddenly and quite loudly, "I'm no force at all, I tell you, I'm just a musty old book of heterogeneous facts and impressions that no one would care a pin about if it wasn't—"

"What?" she urged amusedly.

"If it wasn't that I read aloud from myself so convincingly. You know the tune is sometimes more important than the words."

She laughed in spite of herself. But this was a new Charlie, shabby in his self-abnegation, and she was stabbed by an unwonted pity, fondness and daring.

Her hand found his and closed over it tightly.

"Don't mind," she begged him almost in a whisper, "don't mind what you are, Charlie. We all feel that way at times, that we can't go on. What would you say if I told you I—even I have days of feeling that I practise a gross deception on my friends, that I'm living a life for which I don't qualify?" She turned upon him vehemently, "And I'm filled with a dull anger at myself for my lack of directness. The astonishing thing is that no one suspects me. And when I go about inspecting the hateful charities which my dead husband adored I want to turn and run. I am conscious of no benevolence on my part, only a tremendous futility and sadness. And then the loneliness of bearing a great name and dispensing a great fortune."

"But my dear Gertrude," protested Charlie, his forehead bedewed, "this is a strange disclosure. Are you trying to tell me you aren't happy among your friends?"

She caught her lower lip in her teeth.

"Charlie, I am trying to tell you I am all alone."

All alone . . . all alone . . . the words went scurrying through his brain, leaving their footprints everywhere. He stared at her piercingly and he saw the collapse of her dignity royal—he saw her gazing back at him like a very young girl. And he did not know

what to say. Only the sweet virus of a new knowledge was bringing him a kind of youth.

"Mallerby?" he queried excitedly, almost harshly. "Were you in love with him?"

She shook her head.

"I was quite a child then. I had no soul of my own. And he kept me like a prisoner in a tower. Is that conducive to love?"

"Oh," he said, "pathetic, tragic in its way. . . ." And his brain took up a long chain of half-forged links. "She's never been in love . . . I've never been in love. . . . Both of us missed out . . . diverted into other channels . . . such a life for a fine woman. . . . If only I were a fine man . . . but I'm no more than driftwood. . . . She would see through me in time. . . ."

"Well," her voice came again from afar, "I'll tell the whole truth till it hurts us both. I've been terribly grateful for your personality in my house but not always awfully interested in what you were saying—because, you see, I couldn't follow. Dear, dear Charlie, don't misunderstand. It's just that I'm not a particularly mental woman."

Her eyes begged forgiveness and he thought distractedly, "Mental woman? God bless her, who wants a mental woman? Cold pie!"

"There have been times," she dared very slowly with an adorable hesitancy, "when I've wished you were less clever. Charlie, and more human, when I've wished that we might be just two ordinary people not so very distinguished or sought after. Living-more-for-ourselves—"

God! He closed his eyes. He thought riotously, and the beautiful pic-

tures came in fascinating detail, sinful, tempting detail . . . her house, her fortune to the end his days . . . gone all compromises with poverty . . . suave brilliance . . . solid success . . . what he deserved . . . what he was most fitted for. . . .

He opened his eyes vacantly, still lost in the voluptuous parade.

Then he saw Gertrude Mallerby herself, soft with love and trust, and he would not let the pictures come back. . . .

III

ROME is often disagreeably cold in winter. I knew a man once who called on Charlie, he had letters to him from a mutual friend, and found him in a wretched room in a wing of an old palazzo, dressed in an altar cloth with a stocking tied round his throat. He was subject to quinzey. But Charlie, rising, it would seem, superbly above his embarrassment, invited his caller to take luncheon with him next morning. At that meeting, the fellow tells me, he appeared faultlessly attired, trousers creased, shoes shining, the ends of his mustaches pommaded—even a pansy in his buttonhole. There is a little cobbler in the Via della Scrofa who can take the tongues out of your shoes and with the leather can skilfully repair the toes of them. There is a little tailor in a by-street of Paris who can fashion a fresh lapel out of the under-side of your coat.

They sat *al fresco* in the Piazza di Venezia and ate *maritozzi* and drank *café nero*, and the fellow tells me that the charm of the encounter was one which lingers long in his memory. . . .

A colored crayon for Charlie!



Americana

By Major Owen Hatteras, D. S. O.

I

Massachusetts

FROM an interview with Col. Charles L. Young, "an established attorney at law, with a lucrative practice, in Springfield, Mass.," in the *Sample Case* for February, 1923, page 35:

I proclaim, with every drop of blood in my veins, with every ounce of energy in my nervous system, with every breath I draw, that the United Commercial Travelers of America is the grandest brotherhood of men that the world has ever produced.

II

Kansas

FROM a speech delivered in the Kansas House of Representatives, February 7, 1923, by the Hon. Mr. Hudson, of Bourbon County:

Chewing tobacco produces dyspepsia, and dyspepsia makes for discontent, and discontent leads to unhappy homes and divorce. If we are serious in our efforts here to cure the divorce evil, we ought to get to the root of the thing and start by stopping the sale of chewing tobacco.

III

District of Columbia

FROM a letter dated Washington, D. C., and signed Oreon Marie McKee, in one of the popular women's magazines:

Everyone must love Ethel M. Dell. . . . Oh boy! wouldn't it be heavenly to have her tell us about herself. I am a young authoress myself, on the threshold of success. I am in the throes of happiness at having two of my manuscripts accepted for publication, but if I could get a glimpse of Ethel M. Dell and

hear about her own life, my joy would be overwhelming.

IV

Texas

FROM an editorial in the *Houston Chronicle* of January 16 last:

The Silence of Goose Creek

A child screamed in the night—a little girl eight years old—but no one stirred.

Instead, a man—a painted, disguised man—drew his gun and threatened her with death, if she did not cease.

A woman was lifted from her sick bed and carried forth into the darkness to be whipped like a dog.

There were strong men to wield the strap, to take the Spanish Inquisition for a pattern, but there was not one to raise his voice for common decency, for the teaching of his fathers, for ordinary American manhood.

Hundreds knew this thing had occurred, yet for four days a whole community remained silent.

The *Chronicle* was the first paper in Texas to report the horrible deed, and its information came through a letter secretly mailed in Houston by a Goose Creek resident. That was five days after the crime had been committed. . . .

Is this white supremacy? Is this Gentile civilization? Is this Protestant justice? Is this Southern chivalry? Is this Anglo-Saxon law?

V

California

FROM an harangue in open court by the Hon. Frank R. Willis, Jr., of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County:

Take the laws of this State and they are all made for the poor man. The poor man does not have any income tax to pay; the rich man does. A rich man gets sick and wants to go to a hospital and he goes to the California hospital and pays from \$25 to \$1,000 a week. If a poor man gets sick he can go to the County Hospital. If a rich man gets old he has no one to take care of

him; he has to go around and do the best he can, but if a poor man gets old he can go to the County Farm.

VI

New York

FOURTH stanza of a Prohibition hymn sung by the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union at Hanson Place Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, on the third anniversary of the Eighteenth Amendment:

By a royal act of Congress, backed by States
in strong array,
By the Court's Supreme Decision, sign'd and
seal'd in legal way,
By Jehovah's ultimatum, which the people
MUST obey,

It is in the Constitution, and it's there, there
to stay.

CHORUS

It is there to stay! It is there to stay!
Till the stars shall sink in silence and the
sun and moon decay.
Till the souls of men assemble on the final
Judgment Day;
It is in the Constitution, and it's there, there
to stay!

VII

West Virginia

FROM a pamphlet entitled "The Truth
About West Virginia," distributed by
the Superior Supply Co., of Bluefield,
W. Va.: -

West Virginia stands fourth in Sunday-
school efficiency in the United States.



Moment Sentimental

By W. E. Sampson

I believe that love is with man largely a matter of comfort. I do not mean passion exactly, I mean love exactly. At least, that has always been the predominant sensation I experienced, either in thinking of, or in the company of, the particular maiden with whom I happened to be intoxicated at the moment: the sensation of an ample easy chair in which to sit, and of someone soft and solicitous ever at one's side, to talk reams of sublimely inconsequential and empty nonsense, thus causing no tax on the brain; to look as charming as the materials given her by the ever good and generous God will permit, thus causing no tax on the eye, and to act as a breakwater not only for the great flood of cares and importunities of the outer world, but also for the great flood of other women, and the irritating tumult of falling in love, or abstaining from falling in love, thus causing no tax on the heart. If this is not comfort . . . ah, but it is!



TO impress a woman a man thinks it necessary to do great things. To impress a man a woman needs merely to wink, smile or yawn at him.



The Goat Bell

By Ford Douglas

I

AN unending wave of rich black loam rolled smoothly from the plow, and the share, scoured by the light soil to the polished perfection of a silver blade, reflected the rays of the morning sun. Occasionally Lem Fuller, as he followed the team down the furrow, gave voice to song. Rather, he lifted his voice in a number of songs, or parts of them, though all to the same tune. The refrain that lingered with him and the one he most often repeated had to do with the trials and tribulations of a certain "Miss Lucy" and of her baby that "was born on Christmas Day." It was a very old song, coming from the Cumberlands, whither it, or something like it, had been brought by the early English settlers. The words were rather pointless, the tune a quavering and melancholy dirge expressive of sorrow and lamentations.

Lem spoke to his team occasionally, more from force of habit than necessity, for the well-trained horses bent willingly to their work. In the plow-boy's mind—he was only twenty—was a hodge-podge of thoughts, brief and fragmentary. Sometimes he did not think at all, but traveled the length of the field with his mind a blank. He rather liked that; it was restful. Subconsciously, though, in spite of his coma, he was enjoying the morning. The sun shone down from a cloudless sky, the meadow larks were calling from the thickets, and the landscape was one of quiet beauty. At the foot of the hill, where Goose Creek wound its way through the timber, the leaves

were beginning to appear, obscuring the little valley in a dull green haze.

At times an involuntary mental process was set up in Lem's brain. A rabbit loping across the edge of the field brought a desire for his gun and a noisy bluejay winging his turbulent way overhead caused him to look up and demand "Who you a-cussin'?" After some reflection he laughed aloud at his inquiry to the bluejay, resolving finally that the witticism was worth treasuring and that he would tell it at Haley's Store.

This started a vague and somewhat disconnected train of thought. A momentary picture of the store and then of a full bucket of mixed candy in rainbow colors that was in the window caused him to expectorate copiously into the furrow. His sole wealth, a dime, was in his pocket, and now as he fingered this his longing was great. This brought to mind the greater affluence of some of the town boys, and he fancied himself giving a number of them a sound drubbing. "I'll show 'em!" he cried, and he smote the palm of his hand with his fist.

Gradually less ferocious triumphs occurred to him. One of them, a long-cherished scheme, had to do with card-playing. Secreted in his room was an advertisement that he had torn from a certain pink-tinted publication. It told of a book, "How to Win at Cards," that was guaranteed to transform the dullest player into a veritable wizard at gaming. Possessed of this he would enter the seven-up tournament that waged Sunday afternoons at Giles's livery stable, and now as he pleasurably

dramatized himself the winner in game after game he pictured the discomfiture and rage of the other players. His enjoyment became audible.

"I'm playin' the ace—gimme your jack. . . . Now I'll take them there ten spots for game. . . . Come on, boys, don't cuss. . . . Chalk me up with all four points—high, low, jack and the—"

A distant tinkle of a bell rudely interrupted his dream of triumph at its very climax.

"God!" he exclaimed, halting the horses. "There it is again!"

For a long time he stood motionless in the furrow, listening.

II

AMONG his neighbors August Ostertag was regarded with some little suspicion. It was whispered about that he drank, for one thing, though this was generally condoned, as many kept a jug secreted somewhere in the barn or fruit cellar. And another thing, and the one that was most heavily charged against him, was the fact that he had ideas of farming at variance with those of the whole countryside. For example, he had invested in goats. This, in a bull-and-heifer community, was regarded as queer, to say the least. Even the oldest settler could recall the name of no one who had ever kept goats. There was a good deal of talk about it.

There were forty goats in August Ostertag's flock, and a theory of Ostertag's that they would subsist on underbrush was fully justified. In less than a month they had devoured all the thistles, weeds, poison ivy and wild grape vines on the Ostertag place, and, breaking through a fence, they ate up a small grove of slippery elm trees, the property of a neighbor. Hostilities were threatened for a time, but nothing ever came of it.

Through it all Ostertag was loyal to his flock. The goats somehow reminded him of soldiers. At times they would deploy as skirmishers, seeking shelter here and there wisely and with caution; again it was no uncommon sight when

they were to be seen charging madly across the field in massed formation. At other times when they crossed a marshy brook they lifted their feet high, goose-stepping.

The leader and war chief of the flock was an aged ram of most sinister appearance. He had the beard of a patriarch, but it graced him with no air of respectability; rather it added to his look of low cunning. His eyes were malevolent, leering, and his nose was wrinkled in a sneer. Yet with all his faults he was the leader of the flock, he was a great lover, his offspring were many, and he was the very apple of August Ostertag's eye. Curiously enough, this admiration persisted though Ostertag suffered from a number of assaults. On the last occasion he had been all but assassinated, laying abed many weeks, and it was upon his recovery that he gave the goat a name in keeping with his arts of war and strategy—"Hindenburg."

The attack had been made at dusk when Ostertag was picking up chips in the wood lot. He was hit with terrific force in the gloaming, catapulted through two walls of a chicken house, fracturing seven ribs and telescoping to the extent that he lost three inches in stature. Nothing, apparently, could have delighted Mr. Ostertag more, and for the goat who lived hard and dangerously he bought a silver bell and this he placed, with some difficulty, about Hindenburg's neck.

It was the tinkle of this bell that Lem Fuller heard and who even now stood breathlessly in the furrow listening for its repetition. Several times within the past few days he had heard the elfin chime, baffling and mysterious in its origin, and then it was that the universe vanished to Lem Fuller and the blood surged through his veins in sudden emotion. The sun, the sky, the fields and the green hills and valleys dissolved into space and conjured up before his dreaming eyes was a scene vastly different. It was like a spell, a vision, occult and almost supernatural. The smiling landscape was gone and now in

its place were the brazen skies and the white heat of the Nile country. A flute shrilled, a drum beat, women danced.

Mystifying as all this may seem, the explanation is simple. The summer before a circus had pitched its tents in town and, while this was no great or unusual event, an incident of the day was to make a deep and lasting impression in the receptive mind of Lem Fuller—change, in fact, his whole destiny.

Widely heralded as it was on the fences and barns of the community, Lem's interest in the approaching event was only casual. At that time he was making a study of ventriloquism, assisted by a book on the art, and besides, he had seen a circus. Another slight factor was that his funds were depleted. His outlay in the literature of what he believed was to be his life work had reduced him to but forty cents, and admission to the "big top" was four bits. It was, then, in the cheaper side-show that the woof and warp of Lem Fuller's existence was to become so fatefully tangled and snarled.

It was a hall of wonders, the side-show, the platform along the canvas walls seating a dozen or more of strange and fascinating folk collected, so the lecturer said, at a staggering cost from the far corners of the earth. There were giants, dwarfs, fat women and an exquisitely shaped young girl with a heavy black beard. Also there was a wild man who howled blood-curdling cries and tried to beat down the bars of his cage; an armless man who wrote calling cards with his toes; a flock of trained cockatoos; and a glass-blower busily engaged at his art and caring not at all for the stares of the curious. All of these were exhibited to the best advantage by the lecturer, a gentleman, Lem thought, of vastly greater oratorical power and platform ease than a Congressman. For the most part the lecturer related only the hard, cold facts regarding his interesting charges; again, he became confidential with his audience, lowering his voice and revealing secrets and most astonishing romances in their lives, in-

different to their gasps of embarrassment. In this fashion he told of the approaching ceremonial in which the fat woman and the dwarf were to be made one; of the French count who in his mad infatuation for the Bearded Lady had followed her across three continents, and of the consequent jealousy and rage of the Dog-faced Man, who sat near her.

"This, ladies and gentlemen," said the lecturer at last, "concludes my part of the performance. . . . I have shown you everything . . . and I will ask you to pass out quietly. . . . However," he held his hat aloft, compelling attention, "I am going to ask the men to stay just a moment. . . . Remember, now, just the men. . . . The ladies and the children will please pass out immediately. . . . Positively no boys under twenty-one will be allowed to remain. . . ."

Hastened by the urgings of a number of ushers, who with sharp cries of "This way out, lady," "Step lively, please," "All ladies and children outside," the tent was soon cleared of all but a few score of men and boys, the latter tarrying despite the lecturer's prohibition.

The master of ceremonies now mounted a platform at the end of the tent.

"This way, men, this way," he shouted, motioning them to approach the wooden railing in front of the platform. "I've got something good to tell you. . . . I'm going to let you in on a big thing. . . . It don't happen often and you're mighty lucky. It's this: We're going to put on something private—an after-show! . . . Gather around, boys, and let me tell you about it."

A marvelous bit of good fortune was in store for them. The owner of the show, the lecturer said, had long held the town and its citizens in high esteem, and now on this occasion he was seizing the opportunity to present for their edification and entertainment a picture and a pageant of ancient Egypt. Rarely had anything of the magnitude of this

extravaganza been attempted in this country, he said, and as a special favor the admission charge had been lowered to but twenty-five cents, "within the price of all." It was to be a marvelous entertainment, an opportunity of a lifetime to become acquainted with the fascinating and mysterious life of the Orient. And, better yet (here the lecturer lowered his voice to almost a whisper), the secrets of the harem were to be revealed—and last but by no means least there was to be dancing by that queen of all Oriental dancers, Fatima!

"You have all heard of Fatima, men. . . . Well, we have her here this afternoon. . . . Not, mind you, in a picture or a photograph, but Fatima herself in the flesh! . . . And she will dance. And believe me or not, gentlemen—before God I only tell you the frozen truth—never before and never again will you have the opportunity to feast your eyes on a form so divine. For the Caliph has recalled Fatima to his palace on the Nile. . . . Today, and this day only, Fatima, wonderful and marvelous Fatima, the Princess for the possession of whom sheiks and sultans have warred and slain—"

From behind the curtain came the shrill and nasal whine of a native flute accompanied by the measured throb of drums. The crowd surged eagerly forward, and Lem Fuller, with his last quarter, purchased a ticket and passed through the gate.

What Lem Fuller saw there that afternoon he could never forget; would not if he could. It made a vivid impression on him, searing itself into his mind and so changing and rearranging his brain cells as to alter his very existence.

The calico curtain was drawn, and there before his eyes was Egypt! A court scene made gay with brightly colored fabrics. Seated on the floor to the right were the turbaned musicians, three in number, with flutes, cymbals and drums; and lolling at ease on low divans scattered about were the voluptuous maidens of the harem. They

were garbed in diaphanous costumes and quite bare as to shoulders and stomachs. Their bosoms, however, were concealed beneath semi-spherical metal shields of solid gold, apparently, richly ornamented with gems, and hanging about their bare middles were girdles of sequins that tinkled with their least movement.

Now they rose from their seats and danced, first one and then another. . . . The flutes shrilled incessantly, the cymbals clanged and, above all, was the rhythmic beat of the drums. . . .

Lem Fuller crowded closer to the stage, feverishly elbowing other spectators aside. The shrill monotony of the flageolets had got into his blood, and now his heart pounded with the measured thump of the drum. His eyes were focused on the woman reclining on the divan in the center of the stage. She was beautiful, beautiful beyond his wildest dreams, and for the moment he beat back an almost overwhelming desire to climb up on the stage and take her in his arms. He knew at once that she was Fatima, for the possession of whom sheiks and sultans had warred and slain. . . . There was a smile on her face as she languidly watched the others dance, a disdainful kind of smile, as though she were saying "Wait till you see *me*!"

The announcer now appeared and held his hand dramatically aloft, whereat the clamor of drum and cymbal ceased and there was a hush of expectancy in the crowd. The climax was at hand, for now the peerless Fatima, the desired one for whom brother had slain brother and villages had been laid in waste and ruin, was to exhibit her divine gifts and they were all to be placed on a common plane with enraptured sheiks, sultans and caliphs. The spectators crowded closer and there was an eager murmur of anticipation.

She began very slowly, languorously, yet with a skill that held her audience in breathless attention. Her arms and her body swung to the plaintive melody of the flutes and she turned slowly first on one foot and then on the other. The

tempo quickened as did the movements of the dancer. She whirled, spun like a top before the gaping crowd, eliciting shouts of amazement. Now she faced them again, her feet at rest, her hips swaying. She shook her shoulders, quivering the golden semi-globes that concealed her bosoms. The drums beat faster, the cymbals clanged, and now she was dancing with her stomach. It was incredible! The golden sequins that hung in festoons above her waist rose and fell in a tinkling accompaniment. The music became frantic, delirious. Faster and faster she writhed and twisted, louder the chimes of the sequins, and when at last she sank exhausted to the floor the curtain was drawn and there was thunderous applause from the audience. For weeks afterward there was little else talked of at Haley's store.

III

THE horses stood quietly in the field while their driver leaned against the handles of the plow, motionless, his head inclined forward as if in meditation. An artist would have been impressed with the scene; would have thought it, perhaps, another Angelus.

For a long time Lem Fuller listened. His eyes were closed to shut out the commonplace, and as in a vision he beheld again the swarthy beauty of Fatima, the desired. For the moment she was his and his only. Once more he saw her dance, watched her dazing whirling. Now she was standing still and the golden sequins were leaping miraculously from her bare stomach, and then, as though to heighten the illusion, old Hindenburg, by some strange coincidence, engaged in activities that jangled his bell in a distant and rhythmic sweetness.

"Fatima! Fatima!" he called, holding out his arms appealingly. "Oh, come back to me!"

In a measure his prayer was answered. And though it was not the dusky Egyptian who appeared, it was a most presentable substitute. In short,

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it was Miss Sally Peacock, who at the moment was driving by in a Ford.

"Hi there, Lem!" she shouted, noticing his strange attitude. "What you doin'? Ketchin' bumblebees? You've got to get a wiggle on ya if you want to get that forty plowed before Christmas!"

She vanished down the road in a cloud of dust, and yet, in the one fleeting glance that he had, a great illumination had burst upon Lem Fuller. Tremulously he turned the plough over on its side and, seating himself, proceeded to revel in his discovery.

"Why ain't I never noticed it before?" he demanded of himself. "I've been asleep, that's what I've been. 'Cause she shore is a ringer for Fatima. The same size, the same kind of eyes, the same kind of—well, yes, and I bet she could dance like Fatima if she had her riggin'."

It was less than a quarter of a mile to old Bill Peacock's farm, and hardly had Miss Sally backed the Ford into its appointed place between the mowing machine and the corn-sheller and poured a bucket of water into its steaming radiator and a quart of kerosene into its crank-case and had removed a few hundredweight of mud from the wheels with a corncob—hardly had she accomplished these simple duties than she saw Lem Fuller turn in from the road and approach the house.

Intuitively Sally Peacock knew that something was going to happen, and she had more than half an idea of what it was to be. Somehow she always felt that way when a man turned in from the "big road," and, though often disappointed through the visits of lightning-rod agents, oil stock salesmen, crayon portrait agents, hog buyers and, perhaps, by the strangers who dropped in occasionally to borrow old man Peacock's mad-stone—yet with all this she knew down deep in her heart that some day Prince Charming would ride, or walk, into the lane that led up to her father's house. So, pretending not to notice Lem's approach, she hastened in

at the back door and up to her room, where she put some powder on her face, some rouge on her cheeks and brushed her temples lightly with perfume from a quart bottle of Jenkins's Double Strength Jockey Club, which she had purchased with sixty-five cents out of her egg money at Haley's Store.

She met him casually at the front door, and then, steering him clear of the sitting-room, where old man Peacock was greasing his boots, led him around to a side porch where there was greater privacy.

"How're you, Lem? What's the news over to your place?" she inquired by way of general conversation. "Set down." She pointed to a barrel-stave hammock swinging treacherously between the uprights of the porch. "Set down and rest yourself."

The visitor eyed the hammock dubiously. It was a tricky device at best, offering no ease or comfort for an inexperienced navigator.

"No, I reckon this will do me," he said, seating himself on a small oil stove. "I ain't never learned to ride one of them things."

She laughed shrilly.

"Look, Lem, it's easy." And so saying she threw herself into the oaken embrace of the barrel staves with a careless movement of her lithe young body. "It's easy when you know how."

He was awkward and inexperienced and conversation did not come easy even with her help. Then, too, his vision of less than a half hour before had faded and he began to realize that he had come on a fool's errand. Romantic Egypt had vanished, and now all he

could see was old man Peacock's barnyard with some runty little pigs grubbing beneath a broken-down wagon.

"Well, I just thought I'd come over and gas a spell," he explained rather lamely, "and I reckon I'd better be gettin' back. The team's standin' there in the fence corner." He picked up his hat and rose to his feet. "Guess I'll be goin'."

"No use to hurry, Lem. It's kinda hot out there in the field." She threw herself in a more comfortable attitude, full length, with her arms under her head. "Don't hurry."

"I orter be a-plowin' and so I'll be a-gettin' back to—"

His last few words had come slower and slower, ending finally with his remark unfinished. For now he saw in the girl's position a marked semblance to the voluptuous Fatima on her divan. A double row of yellow buttons on Sally Peacock's dress, marvelously like sequins, attracted his eye mesmerically, and now once again he felt the white heat of the Nile.

Desperately he strove to tear himself loose from a situation that he felt was about to engulf him, but Destiny intervened. A half mile away, over in the Ostertag pasture, old Hindenburg bent an ardent gaze upon a young and attractive nanny going mincing by. . . . And then when the elfin chime came floating mysteriously on the south wind the Fatima of his dreams was in Lem Fuller's arms.

* * *

A month later, after they recovered from the accident of the barrel-stave hammock turning turtle, they were married.



RECCESS—a legislative term meaning an opportunity for the dry Senators to go out and get a drink.



Hymn to the Eighth-Rate

By Wayne Saunders

THERE is no theory on earth sounder than the theory of negatives and positives; the theory, that is, that positives exist only in relation to their negatives; that they are, in fact, entirely dependent upon their negatives for any existence and significance whatever. In the moral field, of course, the proposition, though true enough, has been unmercifully hackneyed—as everything in the moral field is unmercifully hackneyed. With this preliminary apology, let me remind you that good exists and has significance only in relation to evil; that without the conception “evil” there could be no such thing as the conception “good”—the conception of evil, as is the case with all negatives (granting for the purposes of discussion that evil is a negative), being prior, and literally creating the positive conception “good”—just as positively and just as surely as a woman creates a love affair, or a man a poem, or God auricular neuralgia. So with dishonor and honor, hate and love, sorrow and joy. This ultimate priority of negatives should not be overlooked; all positives of whatever nature emerge only through the womb of the negative.

Turning, now, from metaphysics to life, and thence to that almost snowed-under portion of life now generally in ill-repute, art, the proposition works as nicely as a Waltham watch or a proof that the hypotenuse has a certain relation (which at the moment, curiously enough, I do not seem able to recollect) to the sum of the other two sides. I hold these truths to be, if not self-evident, at least self-explanatory; that one never fully appreciates a fine symphony orchestra until one has listened

to a rotten one; that one never fully appreciates a beautiful painting, or a beautiful poem, or a beautiful woman until one first has seen, read or kissed an ugly one. I believe these things, upon the slightest reflection, will be as obvious as the Woolworth Building and as incontrovertible as Dr. Johnson’s refutation of Berkeley. I care not how fine may be one’s perceptions, how delicate one’s sensibilities, how faultless one’s tastes, or how proficient one’s judgment—the full force of perfection, or relative perfection at least, in the field of art (than which all other fields are ultimately and intrinsically so many town dumps) can never be fully realized until one is to some extent familiar with its opposite, or at least its relative opposite.

Wagner has meant infinitely more to me since I have endured, with much prayer and fasting, his various imitators. I first discovered that Rubens could do with a pencil brush what Shakespeare could do with an imagination when I studied the Arrow Collar, Williams’ Shaving Cream and Wrigley’s Spearmint ads—to say nothing of Mutt and Jeff. Somehow drama has come to be an infinitely more real and vivid thing to me after having witnessed Zoë Akins at her worst; it has, for instance, impressed upon me, as nothing else on earth could have done, the first-rate craftsmanship of Zoë Akins at her best. My first reading of “Henry Esmond” left me with the impression of an interesting story, well told, structurally conceived, and with no little ingenuity at character portrayal. Some time after, I chanced on “Jennie Gerhardt.” . . . And when subsequently I

- tackled "Esmond" the second time I became suddenly privy to the ineffable mystery of style, incidentally making the acquaintance of the prose Shakespeare. Ever since having attempted to draw the "Venus de Milo" and, naturally, having become more or less familiar with the drawing, Praxiteles has stepped from the tomb, shaken off eight inches of accumulated dust, and contracted the habit of invading my studio at all hours of the day and night, sitting in my pet *fauteuil*, and making continual, sweeping and strangely disturbing curves in the air with his right arm. After having disposed of three volumes of Carl Sandburg, I now turn to the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" with an awed anticipation so laden with holiness that it is almost obscene. After having given eye to the various morons engaged in the disgusting business of attempting to imitate Charlie Chaplin, I have come to realize as I should never otherwise have done that this same Charlie is an artist of the very first tank of the first water.

The theory holds good anywhere and everywhere. I never dreamed that certain portions of the Ohio River were very beautiful until I saw certain other portions. I never dreamed there could be æsthetic qualities in a modern dogmatic religious system until once, upon leaving a Catholic Church, I fortuitously happened in upon a Baptist revival. I never dreamed that the girl who occupied the seat two benches in front and one row to the left of me in my French class was easily the most

surpassingly beautiful thing that ever donned a skirt until I began to scour the landscape for her homotype.

We may not always be conscious that these negatives are what bring to us the vividness, the poignancy, the significance, the reality and the relative perfection of their correlative positives, but they do it just the same. In order to react properly to a good piece of work, a man must first be able to react properly to a bad one. In order to deliver a worth-while opinion on Nietzsche, one must first be able to deliver a worth-while opinion on Dr. Frank Crane. In order to recognize wisdom, one must first be able to recognize nonsense. Until we first learn just what an ignoramus is, we have small chance of ever fully comprehending just what a Goethe is. We all start out in life by being ignoramuses. Until we first know exactly what we have been, we have small chance of ever knowing exactly what we are. . . .

The way fully to appreciate Fritz Kreisler's playing of the Kreutzer Sonata is first to listen to its rendition by a professional teacher of violin. I am well aware of the exquisite pain incident to this latter undertaking, but I am also well aware of the poignant elation incident to a subsequent hearing of Kreisler. Having found the experiment extraordinarily efficacious myself, I hereby heartily recommend it to you. It is but a random selection from a large dry-goods box containing more thousands of examples than I have time at the moment to enumerate.



A MAN'S first mistake is to kiss the wrong girl. His second mistake is to apologize to her.



THE lover a woman remembers longest is the man who was never in love with her.



The Happiest Day of Her Life

By Victor Thaddeus

I

MRS. CARTER had been so happy all day she had nearly cried several times. But Jim Rogers was with her and would not understand, and besides she wanted to tell him at the last moment when they were walking down to the depot together. Even then, as he was only a boy of twenty, he would not be able to realize what it really meant to her. Not for many years would he understand even faintly how much the return of a husband after years of indifference could mean to a woman.

She stood before the mirror now, changing her dress, a small woman with sentimental eyes and a wistful mouth. She put on a pink frock, white slippers and a large light hat. Now she examined her face anxiously. Could it be possible that Harper would really love her again? After all, she was no longer a girl—seven years had passed—she was thirty-six now. But she had clayed her face the day before and had remained in her room. The furrow between her eyes was gone, and so were the wrinkles on her forehead. Her complexion felt smooth and soft to the touch. It would not last, of course, but then it was always the first impression that counted so much. And Harper—!

She sat down almost in a dream, seeing him before her, handsome, reckless, indifferent. What hard, cruel work it had been trying to hold his love! How many nights she had passed in tears! Yet, here in her hand was the letter, with those sentences she would never forget—about how empty his life had grown without her, how he had come to

feel the need of her more and more every year, but had been too stubborn to write, until now, when he realized the foolishness of the separation, he was determined to put an end to this nonsense, so was coming out to her. They were both old enough to know better. It was not as though they were boy and girl again.

"I need you in my life, as you need me in yours," he wrote, "so I am coming to you next week."

Could it be true? Mrs. Carter turned from the letter to the telegram.

"Arrive Dolores on evening overland. Harper."

That was tonight. Tonight! She went to the window and looked down the coast, red in the evening light. Around that headland beyond the Mission she would watch the train come as she had watched it so many times with Jim. A puff of smoke, a gleam of metal, and then the long chain of cars swinging around the curve. And in one of them, Harper.

From the hotel court below a cheerful voice called up.

"Hullo, Mrs. Carter!"

Mrs. Carter looked down and saw young Rogers. His tall figure was foreshortened to an upturned face. Suddenly a hand appeared there, and he whistled shrilly in the way that always made her start and exclaim. She saw the heads of several people sitting in the court turn and stare at him angrily. After drawing her face inside the window in recoil from the noise, Mrs. Carter put it timidly forth again. Here was a boy who would never grow up.

"What is it, Jim?" she asked in a gentle voice.

"If we're going to walk to the depot, it's time to start."

Mrs. Carter felt suddenly nervous. Perhaps it would be better to wait here and drive down at the last moment in the hotel bus. The rattling over the road would distract her attention, and she would be able to leap out, excited but not at all hysterical, as soon as Harper came walking from the train. On the other hand, sitting still so long might bring on some kind of a crisis when she did see him all at once, and she knew if there was anything Harper hated it was a scene.

She shivered. By no means a scene! The walk down with Jim would quiet her nerves. On the way down she would talk to him about his coming trip over the Pacific, speculate with him as to what Japan would be like, and all this would be soothing.

"All right, Jim, I'll be down in a moment," she told him.

Rogers was waiting for her in the lobby when she descended. Now that he was leaving, Mrs. Carter noticed that people seemed to forget the way he had annoyed most of them. He was standing there grinning from ear to ear and shaking hands in an awkward way. But even in these last moments of taking leave his boisterousness refused to be moderated. She could hear his huge laughs from the floor above, and as she approached she saw him, to her horror, seize hold of Mr. Porter, the desk clerk, who was extending his hand in his usual dignified way, lift him across the counter and, holding him by the ankles so that his hair just touched the floor, proceed to shake him gently until his nose-glasses had dropped off his face, when, by a deft shifting of hands, he turned the little man right side up again.

Mrs. Carter turned scarlet and bit her lip. But now he had taken her arm and they were walking out together.

"Oh, Jim!" she exclaimed when they were on their way, "whatever made you do an awful thing like that?"

Rogers laughed.

"Porter's been complaining about our parties ever since we've been here, so

I just asked him once what would happen to anyone who stood him on his head in public and he said he'd be put out of the hotel mighty quick. So I thought I'd wait until I was leaving."

Mrs. Carter looked up at him. How like Harper he was! Just the difference in their ages, that was all. Harper was forty-three now. But the same build, the same broad shoulders and powerful body, the same dark hair, and face perpetually smiling, the same ridiculous way of behaving, and indifference to public opinion. No one could say Harper was clever; she knew that he was not. His face at rest, she remembered well, had frequently a vacant expression. But then it was so seldom at rest. Harper had something, just like young Rogers, that was far more dear to her than cleverness; he was reckless, enthusiastic, silly, like a great child. And in the days when he had really loved her she had felt how spontaneous was his love; as soon as it started to go she had known that, too. Neither Harper nor Jim Rogers could dissimulate in the least.

And Mrs. Carter could dissimulate well. She could pretend, and no one would know she was pretending. Little pleasant smiles came easily to her face, she could control her voice so that it spoke feelingly what was not felt at all. Perhaps, she had always thought, that was why she had loved Harper so much. He was so different, so much everything she would like to be, but couldn't. When Harper got angry he said in a loud voice exactly what he wanted to say no matter who was around. Jim was the same way. But Mrs. Carter could never do anything like that without quite losing control of herself and becoming hysterical. She must always speak in a smooth, kind way and be nice to people.

Mrs. Carter sighed. Men like Harper and this young Rogers scared her terribly at times, but she could not help loving them. And now, as Rogers pressed her arm suddenly, she looked up into his face again. He stopped and looked at his watch.

"There's our garden," he said. "I'll

probably never be back here again so let's go and sit there for a few moments and make it the last time. Do you want to?"

Mrs. Carter sighed again. What a pity Jim was going away. It was the one thing that spoiled today from being quite the happiest day of her life. Why, she would barely have time to introduce them at the station. Now that the great sadness of her life was removed she could see that the weeks spent here with Jim had been happy ones.

She took his hand.

"All right, Jim, if we've got time."

II

It was the garden of a house that had been destroyed by fire and had never been rebuilt or cleared away. Flowers and tall green weeds ran riot among the foundations; Mrs. Carter, holding her skirt daintily in one hand, followed Jim to where a corner of the wall made a seat looking out over the valley, shaded by a great bougainvillea in flower. But suddenly she became doubtful. Would Jim try to lift her up as usual? That had been all right when it had seemed to her that Harper was gone forever, but now that he was coming back to her, should she allow the boy to do this?

Rogers took her in his arms as if she were a leaf, stepped over the rubble with her and put her down on the wall. But he did not let go immediately, seemed to linger with his arms around her—

Mrs. Carter loosened his hands and he sat down beside her.

"Oh, Jim, what a beautiful evening. But you must promise to behave yourself. There's a very important reason."

He laughed.

"What is it, Mrs. Carter?"

She took his hands and told him.

"Harper is coming back to me to-day!"

Rogers put his fingers between his teeth and sent a shrill whistle across the valley. Then, as Mrs. Carter shrank away, her hands over her ears and with

eyes closed, she suddenly felt his arms close around her in a bear's hug and then he had kissed her.

"Didn't I tell you he would? So dear old Harper is coming back again!"

He gave another shrill exclamation, stopped—looked at her suddenly.

"So that's why you're looking so pretty tonight! I thought you were all dressed up on my account."

Mrs. Carter took his hands. The way he had said that about her being pretty had given her a thrill. So she was pretty after all? Pretty! But generally men said that only girls of around twenty were pretty. Did she look as young and attractive as all that? But young Rogers meant it, there was no mistaking the way he had said it. He was a dear, dear boy and she was very fond of him. But he had kissed her again, and that must not happen any more now.

"Jim," she said, "I've told you before you mustn't kiss me. You're just a boy, so you don't really know what you're doing, but a man should never kiss a woman unless he's really, truly in love with her, and a woman should never let a man kiss her unless she knows this and is in love with him too. So you mustn't do it again."

"But I am in love with you," he protested. "When does the old gentleman arrive on the scene of action?"

"What old gentleman, Jim?"

"Harper—didn't you say Harper was coming back to you again?"

"Oh, Jim, please don't talk of Harper like that. Harper isn't an old gentleman a bit. He's a man in the prime of life. Harper's a very wonderful man, Jim. He's a very distinguished-looking man; people always ask who he is and say little admiring things when he's around. And, if you promise not to get conceited, I'm going to tell you something very nice—when you grow up more you're going to look just like Harper. And you're going to be just the same fine kind of man, too."

Rogers sprang to his feet, removed his hat with a flourish and made a low bow.

"In the name of Harper and myself I thank you!"

Suddenly, with a change of mood, he put his hands in his pockets and began to sing an old sentimental love song.

Mrs. Carter listened, dreaming, her eyes fixed upon the horizon through which, even at that moment, Harper was being whirled toward her. On the quiet evening air the song seemed very lovely. Harper had a baritone just like Jim's; she remembered how he used to sing to her that first summer in the country when the whole world had seemed so new and wonderful to them; now he would sing to her again, both of them grown young and tender once more as they used to be, sitting here, evening after evening, through this beautiful summer weather, with the sweet little valley at their feet, and the great glistening ocean stretching away behind them.

Tears came to her eyes, as she listened to the boy's singing. And, as usual, his voice was becoming more and more troubled by emotion. His face had taken on an agonized expression, his forehead was wrinkled, his eyes were large and melancholy. He sat down awkwardly at last, exclaiming:

"I feel sad as hell, Mrs. Carter!"

"You mustn't feel sad, Jim. Just think of how many boys of your age would be crazy to go to Japan. You'll find it just awfully interesting when you get out there."

He nodded gloomily.

"I know, but it'll be lonely. I wish I could stay on here in Dolores. You won't believe me, Mrs. Carter, but this has been the happiest month of my life, being here with you."

Mrs. Carter gave a little contented laugh, and patted his hand.

"It's very sweet of you to say that, Jim, and I've been very happy, too. But you mustn't be sad now that you're going away. A quiet place like Dolores is all right for a boy of your age for a while, but you've got your whole life ahead of you, and so much to do, that you really can't afford to waste much time with women like me who are mar-

ried and are really quite locked up in their own interests."

She patted his hand again, feeling very motherly. It was dear of him to talk the way he did, but, after all, she must not encourage him so that he would write, or anything. Harper had never been jealous, but she must take no risks, not even the smallest. It was really foolish to even think of such a thing in connection with such a boy as this, still he was very serious as he sat here beside her now, and looked very sad, so she must be very careful not to hurt him.

"I suppose you're right, Mrs. Carter," he said, after a moment, "but I hate to leave just the same."

Mrs. Carter smiled, and pressed his hand.

"You're a very dear boy, Jim, and you must be sure to drop me a postcard when you get to Japan and tell me if you had a nice trip. Is it time for us to go yet? Harper comes on the train you leave by, and we mustn't be late."

Rogers looked at his watch.

"We can stay a couple of minutes longer and still make it easily."

Then they sat in silence. How quiet, how beautiful, thought Mrs. Carter. From the sun, balanced on the ocean behind them, great red streamers stretched across the sky and rushed down into the windows of Dolores, while from the valley there rose now the clear sweet notes of the Angelus, and they could see the Mission bell ringing in the blue shadows of the grove that seemed to lie almost within reach of their hands.

She turned her head slightly, and saw the long coastline gleaming red in the evening light. Here and there, among the foothills, hung tinted puffs of mist waiting to creep down into the valley when night came. In the marshes along the Dolores River the backs of cattle could be seen moving beside the shining water and, far away in the distance, a few white clouds, dainty as fragments of shell, moved slowly into the light of the vanished sun and turned a coral pink. A colored warmth seemed to be

rising out of the still earth, the air was fragrant with the flowers growing among the ruins, from time to time the leaves of the bougainvillea quivered in a breath of wind that touched their cheeks gently a moment and then passed on over the white Mission and stirred the trees in the grove. And now and again from Dolores itself rose a quick Spanish cry or the distant sound of voices or sudden snatches of conversation, quite clear and nearby it seemed, among the fishermen dragging their nets up to the beach.

After all, thought Mrs. Carter, what a beautiful world, how lovely everything was, and planned for happiness. But young Rogers must be happy, too.

"We must be going now, Jim!" she said gently.

Yes, they must be going. For an instant she had a panicky feeling that they would be late, she would not be there to meet Harper, waiting there on the platform—the first person he would see on alighting from the train. Then she calmed herself. There was plenty of time, and the Overland was always a few minutes late, sometimes an hour.

Jim had not moved. Suddenly, quite before she had realized what she was doing, she had leaned over and kissed his forehead tenderly.

"There, Jim, now you know that I'm fond of you, but in a different way. And now help me up, there's a dear boy."

But Rogers, instead of obeying immediately, caught hold of her so that she was helpless as a child and pressed a long kiss on her mouth.

"With apologies to Harper!" he said, getting up.

But Mrs. Carter was a little hurt for a moment. She began to talk seriously, about business, the prospects for a boy like Jim in Japan, where he was to be in the employ of his father's firm, a large importing and exporting house of San Francisco. But he refused to be serious.

"Damn business!" he told her and, taking her hand, ran with her down the

hill until she was breathless and thought she would fall.

Crazy boy, she thought, gasping. And she was really almost angry now. Her clothes were disarranged, she was slightly disheveled, flushed. And they were in the depot now. The train was coming; Jim was grabbing his hand baggage from the hotel bus; now the long line of cars had ground to a standstill—and Harper was bustling toward her. Everything seemed unreal to her as she made hurried introductions; the blood sang in her face, otherwise the depot seemed still and motionless as if frozen. Only Harper repeating "Jim Rogers?—Rogers?—Rogers?—" Then the voice of the conductor; Jim swinging onto the train, looking back at her and waving his hand as the chain of windows began to move, and calling out:

"I'll send you cherry blossoms from old Japan, Mrs. Carter!"

And Harper, suddenly very excited, running beside the train and calling:

"Any relation to the Soap people?"

III

CLIMBING the hill to the hotel, Harper puffing alongside, Mrs. Carter felt rather tired herself; it was more of a strain walking up than it had been running down with young Rogers. Why, they had hardly started the climb, and it seemed as though they had been walking a long while already. Yet here was Harper, Harper really at last. The train had come and gone. After seven years Harper was with her again. Then what was the matter? Why did she feel like this? So unlike herself, so queer, so different from the way she had expected to feel.

Of course Harper had changed, perhaps that was one thing. He was stout, wore glasses now, and his face looked different. But there was some other change, too. From that first moment when she saw him coming toward her she had felt that. It was Harper and still it wasn't Harper. Then who was it? Mrs. Carter gave herself a little

mental tug. Silly, the way she was thinking. Of course it was Harper. The same dear old Harper. Seven years older, that was all.

Harper walking beside her, carrying that funny little leather bag that he had refused to give to the hotel porter with his other baggage, telling her afterward in a low voice that it contained important business documents he was working on, and must not let out of his sight. Business? Harper? And the funny way he had spoken to the porter, almost like a clergyman, but holding up his hand like a traffic policeman.

Harper taking off his glasses now to rub his nose, and then stopping to unbutton his waistcoat, giving funny little grunts. Mrs. Carter caught herself looking at him with her mouth slightly open, and then looking away quickly when she caught his eyes. What was the matter that she should have this guilty feeling as though she had been furtively watching a stranger? And Harper's eyes—how strange. Why, in the old days, even when they had quarreled most, and he had been most indifferent to her, she had always seen the whole of Harper, quite every bit of him, right there on the surface of those blue-green eyes. But this man, this Harper, he didn't seem to be there at all. Somehow she felt that he was hidden away somewhere behind, observing her from some place where she couldn't see him. But of course this wasn't really so; Harper was just tired after the long journey. And suddenly Mrs. Carter felt very angry with herself for thinking like this. Here was Harper who had come back to her—all this way—bringing her all his love—because he needed her—

"Harper, dear, are you very tired?" she asked softly.

That peculiar look again, that peculiar brisk voice. No, he wasn't tired, but he was worried to know how these Maguire people got the hotel and conveyance soap contracts year after year. Why, they must sell at an actual loss, as the "Purity Snow" had bid down to practically nothing.

"And there's a fat piece of trade there, Ann! Half a million cakes a day, I should estimate. Perkins and I had a long talk about it before I left. But I haven't told you how we're going to combine with the Rogers people. I'll tell you all about it after dinner tonight, and how old man Maguire has as good as come right out and said he's going to fix our feet and hog the whole of the business to himself."

Harper's eyes, narrow as a pig's, giving her a vindictive glance; now staring at the ground ahead of his large stomach, as they walked along. Harper coming to a sudden halt and exclaiming,

"But I guess 'Purity Snow' and Rogers Brothers, with a man like Peter Duncan Perkins working for us, can tell just about any other soap outfit operating to go to hell, eh, Ann?"

Why, this was just the place where it had seemed to her they would stop on the way up and she would stand with Harper's arm around her, her head against his shoulder, both of them looking down at the glowing sea, and so happy they wanted to say nothing to one another. And then, before they went on, he would kiss her in the old way, and then she would really know that all these years had been brushed away like a dream.

Harper was looking away; her hands went out, then drew slowly back again. Mrs. Carter felt suddenly frightened. Suppose he should turn and stare at her and say "Why, didn't I kiss you in the station, Ann?" Of course he wouldn't, but that something inside of Harper she didn't seem able to see, yes, she had a feeling it would say that. Better to walk on like they were doing now.

To walk on, and look at things in a different light. After all, wasn't Harper right? They were neither of them young now, young in that way. Harper was not like Jim Rogers. He was twenty-three years older than Jim. But this number quite took her breath away. Why, he was more than twice as old as Jim, and she herself was sixteen years older.

Harper's voice came from the distance as he talked. Now and again it seemed to rush up to her very loud like a gust. He was talking about himself now, how he had changed, got over all the silly boy notions that had held him back so long, and kept him from ever amounting to anything. He knew what a home was worth now, what real work meant. That Harper, wild and crazy and unkind she had known in the past, was gone forever, he could guarantee her that. He believed she would find him a different kind of man from now on.

Mrs. Carter heard him as they walked, but the voice seemed to run along as a minor, far-away theme under her own thoughts. How was it that when she thought of Harper now she saw Jim Rogers instead? What was it that had shifted place in her memory? She knew that she was confusing things, still it was strange she should think this way at all. She had little flashes of memory: Harper in the old days undressing and stretching like an animal, then jumping on the bed and doing something ridiculous; Harper smiling at some other woman and then scowling guiltily at her when he saw her watching him; Harper looking down at her on that evening when they made the decision and saying, with childish solemnity:

"All right, if you don't want a divorce, I don't either. I'd just jump into this marriage trap again and get caught worse probably. So we'll split up and won't bother one another unless either one of us should want to make it definite one way or the other."

Seven years ago. That winter Harper had gone down to Miami and she had come west. She remembered how casually he had left, waving his hand; how during the months that followed she had watched the mail eagerly for a letter that would say he was tired of those other women and wanted her back again; how, then, gradually, as the years went by and she heard from friends he was still flitting from place to place leading the same carefree, joy-

ous life and happy without her, she had forced herself to forget.

She remembered before that; the days when Harper used to come courting her, how indifferent she had been, hadn't really cared for him much until after they were married. Harper was rich, it would make her mother happy, that was all it meant to her. And then how, as she fell more and more in love with him, he had seemed to care less and less for her. She remembered the little bitter stabs after she was alone—if she had been unfaithful, had made his home life miserable and had been unkind like some women she knew were to their husbands—but why, why when she loved him so much?

Harper's voice in one of those gusts that rushed into her ears.

"—yes, two things, Ann, home and work; no man can live without them. He may for a while, but when he reaches my age he begins to have sense—"

So she had forced herself to forget, but had never really forgotten. Only, until that morning when she first saw young Rogers she had managed to banish Harper, as it were, from the thoughts that could hurt her; had banished him into a dream, sad and lovely. Yes, she had managed to do that before she met Jim. To sit and dream about Harper, that was all she wanted to do; she knew she would never live with him, probably would never see him again. But Jim had changed everything.

She remembered his voice breaking suddenly into the quiet of the hotel lobby, how she had felt weak, almost gasped, at the sound, and, turning, had seen him coming forward to the desk. For a moment it had seemed to her that this *was* Harper. And when she realized it was just a boy who looked and talked rather like Harper, the pain had remained. It brought back all the old longing, made her understand how empty her life was without him.

She remembered, then, how after she knew the boy, she had watched his face eagerly for every change of expression, had stood quite still in her

room sometimes listening to the sound of his voice. She remembered the walks and rides and dances they had had together; the hotel was a quiet place to which the same people came year after year from the hot inland valleys of the orange belt, and, until Jim had arrived, she had passed the time wandering listlessly along the beach or sitting on the veranda. But Jim had treated her like a girl, had arranged for picnics and fishing parties, had gone to Dolores for horses, had made her get up and dance with him though she hadn't danced for years, had got sentimental and tried to make love to her on warm, moonlit nights as they sat under the bougainvillea or on the beach together. Then she had smiled, had chided him gently—now—

And all these days since Jim Rogers first came she had dreamed of Harper. She had been sad and lonely, this boy seemed like a shadow of past happiness come to mock her. Almost desperate at times. And then, again, there had been moments when hope would flash up, choking her throat and making her almost dizzy—suppose some day Harper should come back to her again? Suppose that should happen yet? And that day which would never come began to live in her thoughts as the happiest day of her life.

IV

So here they were at last at the top of the hill, only a short distance from the hotel, Harper fixing his garter and panting. Now he was waving his hand toward the garden.

"Let's sit down on that wall a minute, Ann, while I get my breath. This climb has been more of a pull than I figured it would be."

What made her feel so queer about going over? It was the same feeling she had had down in the Dolores depot about sitting alone, face to face with Harper on the drive up, the feeling that had made her want to walk up rather than ride. A strangling sort of feeling, making her want to move about and not think of anything.

But she couldn't help thinking. Jim Rogers was gone. Here it was that he had always lifted her up and carried her; but Harper had finished fixing his garter now and was feeling in that funny little bag. He was talking about soap again. He had put on another pair of glasses, and sat hunched-up, muttering. And now Mrs. Carter had a faint remembrance that one day Harper had spoken to her about the factories in which his money was invested, and had said something like: "Oh, I suppose some day I'll settle down and take an active interest in the business, but not for a mighty long while. I want to live first." Had Harper then ceased to live?

She looked at him. He had taken off his hat and was scratching his head, almost quite bald. Why, he looked like a typical business man as he sat there. Still he had brought his love to her again. But had he? She wondered. Or was it only that he needed her now? So this was really what settling down meant. Because Harper, the real Harper, handsome and reckless and foolish, was gone forever, and what was left wanted to creep into a safe place that was sheltered and locked up at night like that little bag.

Mrs. Carter sighed. Well, this was what she should have expected, she had simply been silly to think of anything else. But suddenly she felt a little stab. Her frock, her slippers and hat, Jim who had said she was pretty and had kissed her, who had called out that he would send her cherry blossoms from old Japan.

Would he? Of course not. For he was only a boy and would soon forget. To Jim things that were really silly and worthless, as Harper had said, were still worth while. Some day he, too, would be carrying about a little bag, perhaps, and drawing out his words like a clergyman, but not yet. He might send her one postal, or two, but that would be all. A queer thing had happened: Harper's face, the old Harper, seemed to have faded away, and now Jim's was there instead. She would

never forget this last day with Jim, when he had lifted her up and had sung to her, and kissed her, growing sulky and moody because she was indifferent and would not believe he loved her, and had treated her altogether just like a girl.

No, she would never forget Jim Rogers. She would think of him whenever she thought of spring, and cherry-blossoms and old, beautiful places. But now, as she stood leaning against the wall, Mrs. Carter noticed that Dolores was only a smudge, that the whole valley had become dusky, that the leaves

of the bougainvillea were quite black against the gray sky, and that at the Mission the Angelus had stopped ringing. Why it was almost night.

Night, and everything very quiet. Only Harper's voice breaking through as he poked around the ruins ready to start.

" . . . ought to be on the market cheap or the owners would have fixed it up. If this rubbish were cleared away, Ann, and that old bush you're standing by . . . a summer home. . . ."

So the happiest day was really over at last.



The Price

By Virginia Taylor McCormick

SHE sang of love—her hair unbound,
Bare-footed, in each hand a pail;
Full-breasted, wide of hip and like
The mountain laurel, freshly pale.

Timid, she started at my step,
I saw her bosom fall and rise;
Her lips were curved in innocence
And passion slumbered in her eyes.

The breath of Spring she was, and now
When leaves are brown I come again;
Her hair is bound with ribbons red,
Her lips straight, like the Magdalen.

Her tread is sure, as one who knows,
Her bosom stilled by memories;
There is no song within her throat,
And oh, the longing in her eyes!



A CLEVER woman tries to divert a man; a dull one to convert him.



Vanity Fair

A Fairy Tale with Two Heroes

By Walter E. Sagmaster

GOD was sitting comfortably in His great open-air studio, in the midst of a garden surpassingly lovely in its green-golden foliage, its limpid pools of rich dark blue, its silver brooks that thrilled little chromatic airs with a far-off, drowsy lassitude. Great blossoms of ruby, pearl, and hyacinth studied the languid trees, slumbered in lavish beds made in the shape of stars, hoops, diamonds. The early afternoon sun was poised immobile in a sea of burning yellow. From somewhere among the sumptuously laden branches of a tree at God's right, close by, the shade of Shelley's skylark was warbling away at a sprightly tune of reckless abandon, shot with a million tumbling ripples and appogiaturas. In the far distance, the shade of Keats' nightingale, sublimely oblivious to its life-time nocturnal bias, could be dimly discerned by the vigilant ear "pouring forth its soul abroad—in such an ecstasy! . . ." Great golden bees careened their moaning, buzzing bodies from flower to gorgeous flower, suffusing into the placid beauty of the scene a still greater air of dreamy languor and magic enchantment.

God was very busy, being engaged in making a pink rose. He had just finished attaching the leaves, and was now diligently at work on the intricate, subtle and exacting process of tinting the petals. This rose on which God was working was like no other flower in the garden, for they were all of ruby, pearl, and hyacinth, and were very large, as I have already told you. But this was just an ordinary pink rose, such as one may see any day in a flor-

ist's window—or wherever the florists get them from.

Yet God seemed to gaze upon this rose he was making not with the fascination which the other flowers in his garden awoke in him, but with a certain warmth, and depth, and softness that one might almost call human love. It seemed as though God would have liked to kiss this pink rose, to embrace it—even to have it for his Sweetheart, or maybe his Wife—but that, of course, is absurd. However, it is a pretty idea, don't you think?—and it tells you just the way God felt toward the pink rose.

Suddenly there appeared before God a man, who, though he was not in himself of a particularly striking appearance, looked so incongruous in God's garden that one could not repress a desire to laugh—though, of course, one dare not laugh aloud, what with Keats' nightingale and Shelley's skylark and all. This man was tall and very thin, with a spare face whose high cheekbones, like rocky crags, overhung the bluish hollows that were his cheeks. His eyes were very small but strangely glittering; his lips were thin and tightly drawn, with a sharp droop at the ends; he had hardly any chin at all, and jawbones whose rear ends stuck out almost in points—especially when he became excited, and clenched his teeth. His arms were long and very bony—that is, from what one could tell through his clothes, for he wore just such clothes as one sees on Main Street on any day. It was easy to see that the man was—or, I should say, *had been*—an American. For now, although I am describ-

ing him as he appeared to God, neither you nor I would have been able to see him at all (except if he had specially desired it), for he was a shade, having died and left the earth just a little over three years before our story opens.

At the moment the man appeared, God stopped work on the pink rose and looked up slowly.

"Well, Ed?" inquired God, with an almost imperceptible sigh.

The man stood very straight when addressed by God. His jaws clenched, and his lips became even tighter than before. Then he opened his large mouth and said:

"Majesty! Almighty Father! Eternal Light! Celestial King!"

God raised His free hand (for with the other He was softly holding the pink rose) and said, with just the faintest trace of fatigue:

"Ed—I am very busy today. If you don't mind—what do you want?"

The man was for a moment rather piqued, but finally he drew himself together and proceeded, a strange triumphant light in his eyes, and even a hint of color creeping into his cold, bluish cheeks.

"Lord of All! I have news for Thee, —wonderful news! I have come straight from the earth, where I attended a Baptist revival. Majesty: two hundred and sixty-six repentant and contrite brothers and sisters have joined the holy Baptist Church, to praise, glorify, honor, obey, love, and serve Thee forever and forever!"

"Mmmm umph!" said God, lowering His head and returning to His work on the pink rose.

The man was abashed, stricken with chagrin. He had treasured this choice bit of news, and here the Almighty had literally ignored it, slighted it, and returned to some childish bauble merely to pass the afternoon! The long skinny man could not seem to grasp the logic of the thing; but, suddenly remembering the words of the great philosopher Crane: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!", he took courage, and after a few moments, smiling confi-

dently to himself, he withdrew—that is, I should say—disappeared.

God was alone again. An hour passed. Half of the rose petals had been painted, though the strain of maintaining an even delicacy and graduation of tint had been so very great that God had been obliged more than once to lift His glasses and wipe the accumulated water from His eyes with His handkerchief of golden silk.

At the end of the hour, the long skinny man appeared again. He was even more elated this time than previously. Again God laid His work aside and lifted His eyes.

"Yes, Ed?" He asked, just a bit more wearily than before.

"Omnipotent! Omnipresent! Omniscient!" began the long skinny man. "Well do I know how great a task it is to please Thee; but the news I now bring must of a certainty bring joy to Thine heart. I have just returned from the earth, where I saw a most wonderful work performed for the honor and glory of Thy name, and the defeat of Thine Adversary, the Unmentionable. A body of clean and noble men have worked long and hard that a certain book by the name of 'Jurgen,' written by a very filthy-minded man, one who does not fear Thee, O Majesty! a bosom friend of the Unmentionable—a book that is bad for the young people, O Omnipotent!—a book that starts bad thoughts in the young people's heads—has been suppressed, prohibited, *forbidden!!!* I have here the names of these noble men, Majesty, if you would care to—"

"Hhhhh umph!" said God, again lowering His head and returning to His labors on the pink rose.

God was alone again. Another hour passed. It was now 3 P. M. The sun had somehow managed to pivot itself halfway down the western slope of the sky, and the sea in which it swam had somehow turned from burning yellow to smouldering golden blood. The afternoon was maturing; God, however, could not afford to hurry His work. It was all very intricate, subtle, and ex-

acting. A little error, and the whole thing would have to be done over again. The petals were almost finished now, and God could not forbear just a touch of personal pride and satisfaction upon gazing at His handicraft. There was not much left to do besides inserting the thorns. That always remained until last.

At the end of the hour, the long skinny man appeared again. This time, despite his two rebuffs, his face was more jubilantly expectant, more confidently anticipatory than ever. He could not resist breaking in (a trifle impolitely, I think) upon God's privacy and preoccupation:

"Almighty Father! King of Heaven! All-Knowing, All-Seeing, Divine One! I have glorious, unheard of, magnificent news for Thee! Give ear, I pray, O Majesty, give ear and be joyous this day! I have just returned from the earth, where I heard the most wonderful things! *There is to be no more war!!* There is to be no more strife, no more enmity, nor malice, nor hate; no more of the frenzy of nation against nation, brother against brother!! Nothing on the earth any more, O Omnipotent! save universal love—such as even Thy Son hath counseled in the days of yore! Think, Almighty Father—think!"

"Ahhhh umph!" said God, his mouth rotating eccentrically, as though He were chewing His tongue, and found it very bitter.

The long skinny man was dumfounded. He had tried hard, and yet God persisted in ignoring him and returning to His kindergarten amusements. It was hard to understand God. It had always been hard; but now it was harder than ever. The long skinny man was very much put out, and very much perplexed. After a while, just at the moment when God had inserted the last thorn and touched up the last petal of the pink rose, the long skinny man turned as if to go—I mean, to vanish, of course—but his departure was arrested by God's familiar voice at his back:

"Oh, by the way, Ed," called God, "are you going back down?"

The long skinny man could not entirely hide his disgruntlement.

"Yeah—I s'pose so," he replied, dejectedly.

"Know where Central Park is?" went on God.

"Yeah."

"Wonder if you'll do me a favor?"

"Yeah—I s'pose so."

God smiled just a trifle to Himself. "Well, Ed, I'll tell you what I want you to do. There's a place in the park there—right across from Eighty-fifth Street—West Side, you know? Well, hanging across one end of a bench—the first one on your right as you go in—there's a branch of a rosebush that grows just behind the bench. You know the place? Yes. Well, Ed, I want you to take this flower—oh, you needn't snicker; I know it's nothing like what we have here, but it's a pretty good afternoon's work at that, I guess—you take this flower and fasten it right on the end of that branch that hangs over the bench—do you understand? Well . . . You might stay around there for a while, too. I'm expecting a friend of mine to be around that way about four o'clock or so. You'll know him—always carries a large black book filled with blank paper, and a pencil. Writes down words, you know, whenever he sees—well, no matter. He'll sit on that bench—always does. And I'd like you to watch and see if he notices the—er—flower, and then see if he writes in the book. Will you, Ed? I'll appreciate it, old man, I assure you. Now don't forget—the first bench to your right as you go in. Well. . . . And by the way, Ed, when you come back, enter as quietly as you can, will you? I'm going to bed early this evening."

"Er—yes, of course, Majesty! Omnipotent, Omnipresent! Omniscient! Holy of Holies! Light of—"

God yawned.

"Yes, Ed," He said, with a long, deep, weary sigh. "Now run along, and don't forget—first bench to the right as you go in."

Words, Words, Words!

By Charles Divine

I

“WORDS, words, words!” thought Mr. Ordway as he listened to his wife. He began to acknowledge an overwhelming and yet ambiguous feeling of annoyance at these family reunions. Eventually Myra stood at the head of the table and tentatively stayed the relatives from falling to the feast by announcing:

“We’ll begin our devotions by singing the Doxology and then saying the Lord’s Prayer.”

The next moment she unbuttoned her thin, tight mouth. “Praise God from whom all blessings flow. . . .”

The others made less confident efforts to follow her solemn panegyric. She had been the staunchest in clinging to her parents’ religious training, and this devout opening of the meal was an invariable ceremony on the occasion of Grandpa Merrill’s birthday, which was always celebrated at Myra’s because she was the wife of the biggest business-man any Merrill had ever married and his capacious house made the best “gathering place.”

After the prayer the company sat down, and immediately queries arose on all sides as to whether or not Grandpa and Grandma Merrill were comfortable in their chairs. Then Mrs. Ordway remarked that it would be nice to send “far, silent thought to the loved ones absent.”

But in that moment Mr. Ordway had a far, silent thought which went bewilderingly, without any tangible evidence of having been sent, to absent ones who were not members of the family circle and never would be. He

thought of two young women, Miss Preston who worked in his office, and Miss Updike, who sometimes called there. He realized that he had no business thinking of them in the romantic way he did; it was a sensation that would have shocked Myra and her relatives, who had long known him as one who was a pillar of the church and a cornerstone of business and respectability. Yet it filled him with restlessness and a sense of torment.

Aunt Ella, his wife’s sister, was telling the company what a lovely complexion her daughter, Eva, had; and Eva and her husband, Douglas Abbott, were twisting around in their chairs to make sure that the baby, Emory, hadn’t fallen off the sofa, where he had been imbedded among cushions close to the table.

“Eva’s got a skin,” chirruped Aunt Ella, “as beautiful as anything y’ever saw on a girl of sixteen!”

Mr. Ordway let his gaze rove toward Eva, knowing that what he would see would entirely fail to corroborate her mother’s words. His glance traveled on around the table and came back to the point of departure, convinced that all of his women relatives were unattractive to look at and tiresome to listen to.

Words, words, words! How had he managed to stand it so long? And food, food, food, intemperantly provided and gluttonously forced upon everybody far beyond the point of satiation.

“Douglas, pass your plate!” commanded Mrs. Ordway.

“No, no, Aunt Myra,” protested the young man. “I couldn’t eat another bite.”

"Nonsense!" Lean and angular, Mrs. Ordway bent forward insistently. "Pass your plate, I say, or I'll come over there—and you'll wish you had!" This annual threat always brought laughter. "Now, Eva, hand me—oh, catch Grandpa's arm! He's got his sleeve in the butter!"

"Yes," retorted Grandpa Merrill, who was deaf. "Im feeling better, though I catch cold awful easy. Get kind-a stopped up in the head."

"Now, Eva," went on Mrs. Ordway, "hand me Douglas's plate. No two ways about it. He's got to have some more turkey and dressing and all the other fixings."

"If I do," sighed Douglas, "I'll have to let my belt out."

"I went out without my rubbers this morning," continued Grandpa Merrill uninterruptedly, "and I didn't get my feet wet. Sometimes I can do 'most anything. But an old fella like me's got to be keerful. That there cheese, pass it!"

Myra began again, and Mr. Ordway sighed, turning his mind deliberately away from the irritation of his wife's voice, and looked out through the dining-room windows toward the formal garden, the lilacs, and the afternoon sunlight on the grass. It was Spring! Neither his wife nor any of her relatives possessed sufficient charm or interest today to keep his thoughts in this stuffy room, full of the odor and heat of food, family, and over-familiar volubility. Suddenly he thought of silence and a darkened room, and a woman with warm eyes and a full curve of lip.

"I called up the butcher and said 'Can you give me a rump roast on the bone!'" It was Myra's voice echoing through the room, just outside the wall of his thoughts. "'No,' I said, 'I don't want it tied up. You put up the order yourself.' And that's the way you have to do in this city if you want to be sure you're getting what you want. I tell you, it's no easy thing to run a big house like this."

Mr. Ordway became aware of Myra's insistence on her burdens, as if she

played a part in his life so indispensable that no other could have fulfilled it—a sing-song which had become familiar to him through the years and now at last grew tedious beyond endurance. She had a servant and no children except the Baraca Class and the Riverside Thimble and Literary Club. Yet she went on reiterating heroically her complaints!

"Everything gets dusty every day. Always something to clean, especially if you do any baking. Two weeks ago I wore myself pretty well out and got 'an awful sore throat. Dr. Bisbee said it was 'way back in my palate. Won't you have another cup of coffee, Ella? Did you know Mrs. Risley? She's in the insane asylum now. What a shame, such a pleasant woman! What are you so quiet about, Richard?"

"Nothing, dear. Just listening."

II

MR. ORDWAY followed the party out of the dining-room into the garden, where Douglas carried a camera while Eva carried baby Emory, to assemble for "a picture of the four generations."

There was long and meticulous preparation. As Douglas arranged the camera on its tripod Grandma Merrill and Aunt Ella and Eva, holding the baby, bestowed themselves painstakingly on chairs grouped in a row and smoothed their dresses and composed their features beatifically for photographic purposes.

"Pull down your skirt, Grandma," advised one.

"Look over this way, Aunt Ella."

"I was looking after the baby."

"Keep your eyes open, Grandma. The sun ain't in them."

"Smile a little bit, Mother."

"Wipe off the baby's chin, Eva."

"Here, Babe!" Cousin Henry clapped his hands to attract the baby's attention while Douglas behind the camera was endeavoring to accomplish the same mission by whistling, and then, just as he had succeeded and bent over to snap the picture, Grandpa Merrill, suddenly

alive to what was going forward, took out his handkerchief and waved it in front of the lens.

Mr. Ordway left the garden and strolled out toward the front of the house. Its huge bulk topped a triple terrace, just as it did a hundred years ago when his grandfather built it and the city was only a village beginning its pioneer life, unaware of what an industrial center it was destined to become. Two white columns divided the long façade, and the columns, as well as pilasters set in the clapboard walls at frequent intervals, were two stories in height, enhancing a second-story veranda in a manner somewhat Southern Colonial.

But other influences had been at work here, just as they were now at work in Mr. Ordway's breast. On the roof stood a New England cupola—a word in which the inhabitants transposed the “o” and “a” and phonetically evolved “kewpello”—surrounded by a platform and an iron rail like a ship's pilot house, a gaze-bo that used often to be built on houses along the Massachusetts coast. Salem was full of them, reflected Mr. Ordway. Here the women folk climbed to look out over the ocean and watch the return of their seafaring men.

But General Ordway, his grandfather, had been in the State militia, and this house stood in a county far from New England, and the sea had never washed closer to it than two hundred miles!

He smiled to himself, wondering what use of the cupola his grandmother had made. She might have mounted up there and paced back and forth inside the railing in those early days when the view of Court Street was unobstructed and it was possible to discern the General lounging outside Rexford's drugstore with his cronies, while the supper was getting cold. This wouldn't have been entirely unnautical, for the General was said to have been frequently three sheets in the wind!

What a difference, mused Mr. Ordway, between that day and this, and

between his grandfather and himself: the General had been a gentleman of the old school who had founded a prosperous business, who was greatly honored and respected, and yet who had had the courage to be riotous when he would. In those days there was romance. It was a free country. In those days men swore. They were beings of more vigor than vocabulary. The town's aristocrats, from which descended the present generation of unromantics, who permitted Prohibition agents to tell them what they could drink, were big-bellied men, hard cursers and hard drinkers. They endured to a ripe old age.

The more Mr. Ordway pondered on the ways of the past the more poignantly he felt that something was lacking in his life of the present. Here he was, a solid citizen, the head of a big business, a member of the Republican County Committee, a trustee of the First National Bank, a member of the Rotary Club's “glad-hand” committee—though one of the least vociferous; a man sober and respected, who spoke at the men's forum in the church Sunday evenings, usually after some fiery vice-crusader from out of town had harangued them to the effect that “we're pleasure-mad and hell-bent, and it's time we woke up.”

. . . And yet, in spite of all these substantial alliances, Mr. Ordway felt dissatisfied; he was more given to reflection than his fellow Rotarians, many of whom had left off reading books and had concluded their liberal education finished when they quit college. The vice-crusader's words echoed in his memory and mocked him. “We're pleasure-mad and hell-bent, and it's time we woke up!”

That was all very well for the vice-crusader to say, speaking for himself; that was his business; but as for speaking for Mr. Ordway and the first person plural, he was all wrong. Mr. Ordway was not pleasure-mad and he had never been hell-bent; and he was afraid he regretted it.

He wanted desperately to get away from the family reunion. Pleading an

excuse to his wife that he had a business engagement over-town, he was soon walking up the street of fine old residences, immaculate lawns, and patriarchal elms. The sun was setting somewhere beyond the city limits, and the cool and yet subtly warm Spring dusk settled down like a caress.

Mr. Ordway saw a face through the dusk. Then he saw another. The first was that of Miss Updike, pictured fair and fresh as she always appeared when she visited his office on business for the Kimball Turkish Baths. Besides these occasional managerial errands she was known to work in the women's department of the baths, where she gave massages. Such employment gave her, somehow, a particularly sensual appeal; her hands must be used to performing caresses. He thought of harems and fountains, and how ravishing she would look kneeling at a pool's tiled edge in thin silks and bare shoulders. She had bandied words with him recently which had whetted his appetite for romance such as was undreamed of and unattainable within Myra's Nottingham-lace-curtained windows.

The second vision that swam through the dusk toward his brooding eyes was that of Miss Preston, slender and supple, who walked with a provocative grace in the sway of her hips when she passed through his office on her way from one department to another. He had heard rumors of her gaiety. Once his wife had told him: "I don't see why you keep *that* woman in your office. People say she's fast!" Yet he had never let her go, though others less pretty had gone, and a week ago he had even given her a lift home from work in his car, depositing her at the door of her apartment house and declining her invitation to come in for a cup of tea. "Some other time!" he had called out. "Is that a promise or a threat?" she had retorted merrily. He knew the allusion in the query, and it had made his hands grip the steering wheel tighter.

Now he remembered all this, escaping from his wife's wordy world.

He turned into Court Street, threading his way through the crowds homeward bound from store and office, and as he came to the corner of State Street, where a six-story department store stood, he thought of Rexford's little drug store that occupied the spot in his grandfather's day. Somehow it seemed to typify a picturesqueness that had vanished from life. Here Mr. Rexford had set up his business in 1833 and sold the best cigars for three cents. The history of the old town interested him wistfully this evening. Another potent reason for Rexford's popularity as a hot-weather rendezvous of that generation was its possession of the only ice house in town—a hole in the ground! This made it possible for a block of ice to be kept constantly in a pail in the store; and brandy from France was always on hand. Here the leading citizens foregathered, all good Episcopalians and some of them vestrymen too, coming across the "White Bridge" over the Susquehanna and the "Red Bridge" over the Chenango, wearing their dandy blue swallow-tail coats with brass buttons, their silk top-hats catching the sunlight, their neckties in a stock or else wound round their necks and over their chins in front, and their feet encased in boots of such made-to-measure tightness that they had to have machines to put them on as well as take them off.

Across the street stood the old Exchange Hotel, whose proprietor had been a famous man whom Mr. Ordway's grandfather had mentioned in his memoirs: "A lover of good things himself, he always had good tables, and, for those days, as good liquor in his bar as could be found, and many a time I have seen our older doctors, judges, lawyers, businessmen and military dignitaries complacently and pompously emerge from his portals flaunting a big silk or bandanna handkerchief, while wiping off their lips the remains of 'old Jamaica' rum, Holland gin, Santa Cruz or French brandy."

Mr. Ordway sighed. He would no more dare be seen issuing from anybody's portal today wiping the remains

of such things off his lips than fly!

And yet, he felt that he was ready to dare something, and the picture of Miss Updike recurred to his mind. He didn't analyze his mood in terms of Omar Khayyam or any other philosopher, Persian or Puritan; yet his feeling was distinctly embodied in the lines:

*" . . . and in the fire of Spring
Your winter garment of repentance
fling."*

Mr. Ordway's winter garment was drab and ancient and rested heavily on his shoulders, though his shoulders were still erect, still a man's, and his spirit, he told himself, was yet ardent enough to desire adventure. Which should it be—Miss Preston or Miss Updike?

His spirit grew unwontedly buoyant at the thought, and his body tingled. He decided on Miss Updike. Her intimacy with Turkish baths prevailed, that and the glance she had flung at him the last time she left his office, a look as companionable as warm music breathing an "Invitation to the Dance."

He'd stop in a booth somewhere and telephone her for an engagement that evening, and then he'd hurry to the barber's for a hair trim and a face massage. In the telephone booth he was told that Miss Updike was out, but to call up again in half an hour; she would surely be in.

He hurried to the barber's with growing excitement and forgot that it was the cumulative effect of words that had driven him abroad so footloose this evening. The barber, being a member of the same lodge and degree team as was Mr. Ordway, was particularly talkative.

"Words, words, words!" thought Mr. Ordway again.

"Frank Mercer's a nice fella, ain't he?" The barber was speaking of a departing customer who had gone out with gusto. "As good's they make 'em. I done his work for years. He thinks a lot of you, Mr. Ordway. Yea-uh, he always comes to me. There's a difference in barbers, he says; same as everything else. No two barbers work

alike. There was an old fella I used to work on for years—did all his work, cut his hair, trimmed his beard, shaved 'im—and when he come to die the undertaker was going to call in another barber. The undertaker was pushin' for 'im, see? Friend of his. But the old man's daughter wouldn't have it. I didn't care one way or another. I wasn't after the two dollars. But the daughter said, look here, she said, I'd always done his work and if I didn't do it this time he wouldn't look natural. So she had me come up an' I fixed 'im. She was right too! Some other barber'd a-cut his beard pointed maybe—I'd always cut it square and shaved under the chin—and he'd-a looked like another man. Folks 'ud never a-recognized him. There's a lot in that, you know. Though I never thought of it until his daughter said that. The undertaker admitted I did a good job. 'Clarence, you done a nice job!' he said. I got the two dollars and not the other fella! Though I wasn't after it."

Mr. Ordway was nodding as if interested, but to himself he was saying: "In ten minutes Miss Updike will be back at Kimball's."

"Some barbers don't like workin' on a corpse. But I don't care. Just soon shave a dead man as a live one. They can't do nothing to you. Why, there's Miss Updike up at Kimball's. Now, she—"

Mr. Ordway gave a start.

"You know her, Mr. Ordway? Well, she's a pretty slick woman, and she don't mind working in the undertaking parlors."

Mr. Ordway caught his breath.

"Why, she works in Kimball's Turkish Bath, doesn't she?"

"Yes, but they have an undertaking business they run in connection with it, you know, and she lays out the corpses."

A cold sweat broke out on Mr. Ordway's brow.

"I jes' wheeled the old man around—" continued the barber—"he was on a stretcher—wheeled him all 'round the room and did the work same's I'm doing it on you. And—"

But Mr. Ordway wasn't listening any more. His thoughts were too pre-occupied with disillusion. He could no longer picture Miss Updike as lingering lovingly by the side of an oriental fountain. The caress of her hands was more ghoulish than glamorous. The cold touch of mortality was upon her.

III

WHEN he left the barber shop he walked aimlessly toward the new park by the river, wandering up and down under the trees where few people strolled at this hour. They were all getting ready for the movies. Now he thought of Miss Preston, who still remained in his mind as a desirable companion.

He went to his office to call her up on the telephone, and hesitated a long time with the telephone in his hand, wondering if he was committing an action too indiscreet. Still, he remembered the invitation to tea and the gaiety in her manner.

At length he called her number, hoping that the operator wouldn't listen in on the conversation. Miss Preston responded amiably.

"Well, this is a surprise, Mr. Ordway!"

He had a sudden moment of panic at the mention of his name. What if somebody overheard her? He would like to see her, but he told her that if he was seen calling on her at her house people would talk.

"You can't be too careful!" she chided, laughing.

Finally he asked her, with great inward diffidence, to meet him at the office. That was as far ahead as he could plan.

"We'll think of something," he added, his heart beating fast.

She agreed, and the moment she clicked off the connection he began to be beset by other qualms. What if they should be found together alone in his office at night? The elevator man might comment curiously on her entrance at this hour. That was the trouble with living in a city still so small that every-

body of any importance was known and watched and talked about. But the die was cast, she was now on her way to meet him here.

He jumped up and began to pace nervously around the room, examining it with puzzled brows, feeling vaguely that there ought to be more elegant hangings, some wine perhaps, and furniture less stiff and formal than these bare desks and chairs. It lacked the proper setting. Why, in heaven's name, hadn't he gone boldly to her house? That would have been better. Just a friendly little call, a cozy little visit, and defy the world to put a false construction on it!

But he suddenly realized that he was not of hard enough temper to defy the world. It was too late for that. The years when he might have been romantic and adventurous had fled, and their passing had bent him into a narrower rut. This impotency hurt him like a dull pain, and with it came an awakening sense of the danger of his imminent rendezvous, a fear of consequences which might become public gossip. Women had brought suits in court under less provocation!

No, he could never risk that, not in his position.

So, hurrying out of the office, he told the elevator man to "Please tell Miss Preston, if she comes, that I had to go out. There'll be no work to do tonight after all"; and made his way into the street again, avoiding the Court House Square and the main thoroughfare of boulevard lights.

For a long while he wandered in out-of-the-way streets, depressed, resigned to the prospect of returning home uninspired, until it was late and the streets grew deserted and a sudden spring rain began to fall.

He took refuge from the downpour under the awning of a corner grocery store. A wind that was still warm and languorous, as if from far in the South, swayed the drops under the awning and drove him back to a bench on which baskets of fruit were piled during the day.

He sat down and contemplated the night. The rain fell slanting like a whispering curtain of silver beads between him and the arc-lamp in the middle of the street. It fell musically on the sidewalk and on the awning over his head. But it was a mournful kind of music.

While waiting here another man came out of the rain and sank upon the bench at his side.

"Comin' down, ain't she?"

Mr. Ordway nodded gloomily. He examined the other and saw a lean, spare fellow in a blue suit that had evidently been worn not wisely but too well; his shirt had no collar and was open at the neck; his soft hat was tipped back from an eager, nervous face with eyes like caverns, and the skin lay tight across his cheekbones and in hollows near his ears. Above his high shoes, holes gleamed in his socks. He was, in short, a vagrant, of the type which Mr. Ordway, as a former Police Commissioner, ought certainly to disapprove of. He was like the one who had been arrested one day last winter and ordered out of town, and who had been found the next morning frozen to death beside the road. Yes, he was just like him, except that that one had had only one leg.

The man leaned forward beside Mr. Ordway and began talking of the weather here and the weather he had encountered in other States. From the climate he went on to other attributes of towns through which he had traveled. He had a brother-in-law in Oklahoma who was married to an Indian. She sent his mother an Indian dress.

"Beads all over it. Genuwine beads, not these guhdamn ten-cent beads! They was regular beads. . . . This State's the deadest in the Union. I seen 'em all. Pennsylvania's all right. They have dances there. Go to a farmer's house and sort apples, then dance 'n' have a good time. Not this damn fox-trot and one-step they have up here."

The fellow continued to ramble on.

"Words, words, words!" thought Mr.

Ordway. "This man too has got the habit."

And then suddenly the man's speech took a turn and led Mr. Ordway into a tavern in this very city and a gypsy night which he pictured so feelingly that his listener couldn't help but sense the glamour of it.

"It was the Red Onion on the outskirts of town, over there where the Slavs and Lithuanians live. I went in for a drink, in a room back of the bar. It was dark. They had only a couple candles on the table. There was a Slav girl there. She sat playing the accordeen, low and soft. It was a pretty tune, and she was pretty too, damn pretty! She had bracelets on her arms, and some kind of a flower in her hair. I could see it when the candle-light fell on it. I sat down and talked to her. She didn't say much, but what she did say was nice, and she played me another tune and looked at me. Then a Slav come in and walked up to me and called me 'an American son-of-a——.' The girl stopped playing. 'Who're you callin' an American son-of-a——?' I said. 'You!' There h'ain't nobody goin' to call me that, I said; I'll knock 'im—or he'll knock me. I got up and went out of the barroom. He followed me. First thing I did was to grab a bottle and let fly at the lamp. If you ever get in a hotel fight that's the thing to do. Knock out the center light an' then they all can't come at you at once. Then I jumped behind the bar and began lettin' the bottles fly. Big bottles, too, some with wine, some without—Tokio wine. When I got through there wasn't a fellow left in the place. Wine all over the floor, just s'if somebody'd washed it. I went out in the street. Thought at first they'd be laying for me. I didn't have my revolver with me either—got a good thirty-eight Smith and Wesson up home. But there was nobody in the street. The Slav girl was gone. So I went up home. A couple days later a cop come around with a warrant for my arrest. The fellow in the hotel said I broke the mirror. I had to pay for it."

He was silent. The rain grew less loud, only a faint tumult on the awning overhead. To the vagrant, Mr. Ordway must have seemed a glum companion.

"Ever seen the Slav girl again?" Mr. Ordway asked at length.

"No. Too broke. But if I had ten dollars I bet she'd show me a good time."

Mr. Ordway got up to go. The rain had lessened enough to let him continue

on his way home.

The vagrant took a cigarette butt out of his pocket.

"Lend me a match before you go, brother," he asked.

Mr. Ordway, after some fumbling, complied with the request.

The man stared at the match in his hand and the ten-dollar bill beside it. Then he looked after Mr. Ordway, vanishing in the rain. He was whistling.



Notes On the Plague

By Walter von Molo

§ 1

A PHILOSOPHER is one who philosophizes about pretty women—but never in their presence.

§ 2

When a man ceases to love a woman he usually accuses her of infidelity—as if fidelity could survive love!

§ 3

When a woman loves a man, his head thinks for her heart.

§ 4

A woman in love never wants to rule: she wants to obey. When a woman seeks authority she never finds love.

§ 5

No genuine woman is ever womanly.



A Letter to Thrums

By Thyra Samter Winslow

STELLA sucked at the end of her fountain pen. Then she wrote little scrawled, blurred lines on the blotter, following the printed advertisement: "*A. Murello, Groceries, Vegetables, Meat.*" How she hated cheap, give-away blotters! Only the other day she had seen a desk set at Ovington's . . . perfectly lovely . . . inlaid corners on the blotter . . . no use thinking about that . . . even if she could afford it, it wouldn't fit in with anything else in the apartment. Oh, well, this wasn't writing to Evelyn.

She read over Evelyn's letter. There were almost twelve pages—pink paper, how cheap of Evelyn—in Evelyn's uneven scrawl!

"We had such a good time at the Country Club dance—Margaret Lucas asked if I had heard from you—she is visiting the Edwardses with her two children but looks old—they say her husband isn't doing so well. All of the crowd was there, including Frank Sounders, your old beau, who is living in his mother's house now. They had the club all decorated and Julian's Orchestra, though of course that doesn't mean anything to you in New York. Frances Tabor said. . . ."

And then, pages later:

"Be an old dear and tell me what they are wearing in the city. All I know is what I read in *Vogue* and the newspapers. Shall I get a tan suit and how long shall I have the skirt made? Write me a long letter and tell me about everything you see and where you go. We certainly do envy you living in New York. We certainly never could have guessed you'd be the one girl out of the crowd to live there. Give my

love to Albert and a lot for yourself and write soon. . . ."

Stella took a sheet of paper out of the light blue box on her desk. It was heavy gray paper with a monogram in a darker gray at the top, and had a Tiffany imprint on the envelope. She couldn't afford paper from Tiffany's. Of course not. She'd have to be careful and not waste any of it. Still, when you wrote letters to the girls at home—that was the only way you could impress them, really. Stella sucked at the end of her pen again, bit one fingernail, started to write:

Dear Evelyn—

You were a peach to write me such a long letter. I enjoyed every word of it and so did Albert, for I read most of it to him. No matter how busy we are, we always have time for letters from Morrisville.

Well, that would let Evelyn think she was busy, anyhow. Busy. Well, she was, in a way. Housework all morning . . . dishes to wash, the bed to make . . . dusting and sweeping . . . little things to wash out that the laundry always tore . . . when you can't afford a really good laundry . . . neighborhood marketing, then, or going downtown and looking into shop windows . . . home in time to get dinner for Albert . . . evenings at the neighborhood movie theatre or falling asleep over the paper . . . oh, well—what of it? She could have stayed in Morrisville—married Frank Saunders, even, if she had wanted to. Of course, she hadn't exactly known, when she met Albert . . . he'd been a traveling salesman then and had spoken so hopefully

of his prospects. Oh, well, he meant all right, in his way . . . after all. . . .

We've had some awfully pleasant times since I wrote to you, but there doesn't seem to be anything awfully exciting to write about. You are a dear to say you want to hear everything I do. I remember when I lived in Morrisville I used to be awfully interested in what went on in New York. It all seems so natural now that I suppose I'm losing my first thrill, though I wouldn't live any place else for worlds. I wish you could come up and visit me, so that you could get a bit of city life. It would do you worlds of good, I know.

Well, she was safe enough, there. Evelyn couldn't get away. She wouldn't dare write this way if there were a chance that she could. Living in New York! That meant something in Morrisville. Good thing that it did. Nasty, gossipy little town! They all envied her. They'd make fun of her quickly enough if they knew the truth—that Albert's salary was small and that she never had anything—not nearly as much as she had had in Morrisville. This dingy little court apartment on a dingy, treeless street. Oh, well, it wasn't as if they liked her, really. She could have written differently then.

We went to the opening of "Under the Rose." It was an awfully good show. Opening nights are lots of fun, because you can always see a lot of famous people and actresses and dramatic critics. We nearly always go on opening nights if we see the show at all. Wednesday we went to see "The Back Way," another horribly exciting mystery play. I sat on the edge of my seat and just gasped. I guess I'll always be a kid about the theatre. I hadn't intended seeing the show at all, because I'm rather tired of shots in the dark and that sort of thing, but Albert brought home passes from a friend of his in the show business, so of course we went.

The only trouble with free tickets is that they spoil you for paying ever after.

That was truthful, in a way. It sounded a bit grander than it had happened, perhaps. Well, she had been to the opening of "Under the Rose." She had bought seats for it—third row, second balcony. Before the show had opened, she and Albert had stood out in front, shivering a bit—it was a cool night—nudging each other as people passed into the theatre . . . "there, did you see . . . Norma Talmadge . . . I'm sure it was . . . Percy Hammond—you know, who writes for the *Tribune* . . . see . . . look, look, that girl in white, isn't she lovely?" They recognized faces, familiar from the newspapers or the magazines, or heard whispers behind them. Then, just before time for the curtain they had hurried, slyly, around to the second balcony entrance. Not that it made any difference. No one knew them anyhow. Not one face of an acquaintance ever. Second balcony . . . seats too close together, people who nudged and whispered and ate crackling things . . . smells. . . .

The tickets had been free to "The Back Way." That was true. Albert's barber had had a sign in his window about the show and had given Albert the tickets. It had closed the following Saturday. An awful show. No use telling Evelyn that. Shows . . . what else? Oh, yes, shops—things to wear. . . .

I wish I knew what to tell you about a suit. It depends so much on where you want to wear it—though in Morrisville you'd wear it almost everywhere, wouldn't you? The shops are so full of such lovely things. I saw a perfectly swanky suit, blue, embroidered in gold threads and lovely Russian colors and lined in a soft blue-green, but I'm afraid it would be too extreme to wear there. I may get it later. I got a new hat, violet shades with a little green on the edge,

quite small, to go with my new gray suit.

Lovely things . . . of course, if you could afford them. New hats . . . basement things! Why couldn't she have something really nice once in a while? Oh, the hat did look all right, after she had it on. No one would guess . . . if she met anyone from Morrisville. No one else noticed, anyhow. People . . . oh, yes—she did have one thing to write . . . could get it in here. That would give Evelyn something to gossip about:

Guess who I met the other day? You'll never guess in the world. Theda Bara! Isn't that just too exciting for words? I wish you had been here with us. She took a friend of mine—who is a friend of hers, too, to tea, and included me in the invitation, and then drove us home in her car. She has a lovely car, awfully long, of some foreign make. We had tea and waffles and an awfully nice chat. She isn't a thing like you'd think she would be. She's wonderfully well-read and quiet and dresses in awfully good taste and isn't a bit vampy and loves her husband. She's much better looking than on the screen—looks about seventeen. Isn't it funny how different famous people are from what you think they are going to be?

That was true—as true as anything else she had written, anyhow. She had met Theda Bara. A girl she knew did interviews for a movie magazine, and together the two of them had had tea with Miss Bara while the girl did the interview, and they had been driven home in the Bara car. It really had been an interesting thing to do. In Morrisville. . . . What was that

Evelyn had said about Frank Saunders? His mother's house—oh, yes, Mrs. Saunders was dead . . . that big white house set far back in that big yard full of trees. She could have lived there—a car and servants and Frank Saunders . . . oh, well, if Albert hadn't come along. He had, though. Oh, well, after you've made your choice. . . .

Now I've written a long letter. It's your turn. Tell me all the news. I'd write more, but I've got a dinner engagement.

Half an hour more and Albert would be home—there was a steak to fry, potatoes to peel, the table to be set . . . the living-room was still in disorder . . . a dozen little things . . .

and I've got to get ready for it this minute. Tell all the crowd "Hello" for me, especially Frank—of course I haven't forgotten him—

Forgotten him . . . not very likely. Well, it would look as if she almost had, to mention it, like that.

nor any of the rest of the crowd. I'm not one to forget just because circumstances are changed.

Lots of love, from

Stella.

Stella folded the sheets carefully, put them into the envelope, which she had addressed first of all before starting to write the letter, as women usually do. She sealed it and put the stamp on, carefully, in the exact corner. There! Oh, well, it was the best she could do. She glanced at her watch again. She'd have to be quick about the potatoes. Albert was awfully grouchy when dinner was late. She couldn't blame him—a long, crowded subway ride. Poor Albert! After all. . . .



The Wife of a Sinner

By G. William Breck

THE man was very wicked. He committed all the impolite sins—arson, theft, murder—likewise all the polite ones. But these cannot be named. He beat his wife—now and then he choked her instead of beating her—but to give him due credit his embraces were as frequent as his abuses. One day he would give her jewels and kisses—the next he would kick her downstairs. His wife decided that she should pray for him because he was so sinful. So she went to the church and threw herself down on her knees before the carved image of a saint and prayed

that her husband might become a good man. Then she stopped praying and began to think. Her husband was brutal, but his kisses were always sweet to her body. Every bruise he covered with a jewel. For every unkind word he would afterward whisper three adoring ones into her ear. A long time the sinner's wife thought about these things. Then she began to pray again. But this time, instead of asking the Deity to make her husband good, she made a prayer of thanksgiving for herself. As she prayed she smiled happily.



The Two Watchers

By Thomas Moulton

THE south air swings the cowslips
Over the autumn floor;
An apple from the bough slips
Ripe-russet to the core.
'Across the yellow dazzle, as a white drifting feather
I watch my white love wander, the fallen fruit to gather.

I watch my white love looting
Quietly, the season's sweet.
And a blackbird watches, fluting
With each lithe stoop for beat.
Over the yellow dazzle his measure thrills loud-throated;
Hushed in my heart's deep, thrills a wonder golden-noted.



The Battle of the Books

By Leigh Hoffman

I

MR. MIRABEAU sat, with contracted brow, in the parlor of his two-room apartment, hungrily devouring the contents of an evening newspaper. First he read the stock reports, although he had never owned a share of anything in his life. Next, he diligently perused the advice to those in love, despite the fact that his wife was securely in the kitchenette of the next room preparing his dinner. Then he turned back and went through eight long columns of "Wanted—Male Help," although he had, for nearly eleven years, worked in one place and hadn't the slightest intention of quitting. Then he read the weather report, contracting his brow still further, as though, if it met with his disapproval, he could, by some uncanny method, change it.

All this took but a short time, for Mr. Mirabeau was a man of action and did things in a hurry. After he had read everything except that which was worth reading—the political and economic news of the world he found uninteresting and always skipped—his wife called him and he issued forth to dinner. Sitting at the small table, he gulped down his food with a surprising rapidity, scarcely uttering a word the while.

After three minutes of superphysical animation Mr. Mirabeau finished his dinner, drinking down the hot coffee a bit prematurely, to the sore regret of a burned tongue, and rushed back into the other room. Here he hastily adjusted his radio outfit, and, settling down in the only comfortable chair in the room, he strapped the re-

ceivers over his head and eagerly drank in every sound. Under his breath he cursed his wife for having dinner so late, for he had missed the introduction to a lengthy dissertation on how to keep the teeth clean.

For two solid hours Mr. Mirabeau had jazz and Beethoven, Chopin and coon songs, a lecture on criminality and the State Prison by a man who was running for Governor, a violin solo by a phenomenal seven-year-old boy who played "Miséréré" and "Turkey in the Straw," a song entitled "Sweet Hawthorn Blossoms" by a lady with a high-pitched voice, and several bedtime stories veritably poured into his head through both ears. After such a diverse conglomeration of entertainment one would have looked for Mr. Mirabeau to be highly intoxicated, his head fairly spinning and his body reeling with drunkenness, but such was not the case. He calmly arose, after removing his head gear, and stretched his arms and yawned.

"Was it a nice concert?" asked his wife, looking up from her newspaper.

"Oh, just dandy," replied Mr. Mirabeau, "only it doesn't last long enough—they quit too soon. What can I do now?"

His wife, who thought that she, too, might enjoy some entertainment, timidly suggested the movies.

"It's only nine-thirty," she said; "and the last show at the Bijou is just about to start. If we hurry we can make it."

But Mr. Mirabeau could not be enticed away from home. He took a part of the newspaper away from his wife and again fell to perusing it.

This time the advertisements were assiduously and exhaustively studied; he and his wife going over them together.

"Did you see anything that was cheap?" he asked of her.

"Well, the only thing that I found, that's real cheap, is a set of book-ends at Martin and Richter's to-morrow for ninety-eight cents."

"Eh, how's that?" asked Mr. Mirabeau, pricking up his ears.

His wife showed him the advertisement, and, despite the fact that they possessed not a single book, they determined to have the book-ends. Here, at last, was a real bargain, only one set to a customer, way below cost, sold only between eight-thirty and ten, clip, fill out, and bring the coupon along. A full-size illustration adorned the upper part of the advertisement, showing one of the book-ends to be a beautiful clay replica of an owl.

Mr. Mirabeau said that he would stop on his way to work in the morning and purchase them. It was then debated whether his wife should also take advantage of the sale, but they finally decided that one set would suffice. They set the alarm-clock for half an hour earlier than usual, and unfolding their Murphy they offered homage to Morpheus.

Carefully tucking the coupon into his coat pocket, Mr. Mirabeau sallied forth to work the next morning with his regular brisk pace. Going fourteen blocks out of his way he arrived at the office ten minutes late, for the first time since the day he was married, but under one arm the book-ends were securely clasped.

The morning passed by, and when noon rolled around Mr. Mirabeau untied his package and spread his prize out before him on the desk. Long and ardently he gazed at them, and then, calling over a fellow worker, he asked for his opinion.

"They're book-ends, Charley, pretty neat, eh?"

Charley nonchalantly gazed at them,

and looking askance at Mr. Mirabeau, said, with a slight sneer,—

"D'you read books?"

"Well, no; not much," said Mr. Mirabeau, making a hasty attempt at an apology. "About all I read's the papers—but don't you think they're a bargain—only ninety-eight cents."

Charley, however, would not condescend to open admiration, and giving a slight grunt of disapproval he walked away. Several others of the office force gathered around, and the book-ends were minutely examined, struck with a pencil to see that they were not broken, stood up and viewed at a distance, and finally everyone agreed that Mr. Mirabeau had received an exceptional bargain.

Rushing home from work that night, Mr. Mirabeau was met at the door by his wife who bade him close his eyes and follow her into the next room. Leading him to the table she told him to open his eyes, and on obeying her command he saw before him another set of book-ends.

"What!" said Mr. Mirabeau, a trifle peevishly, for his wife was always buying little trinkets for her mother. "What'd you get a set of 'em for?"

"Oh, they're just too lovely, dear, and so cheap. After you left, I looked at the ad again and thought I'd better go down and see them. And what d'you know? They sold me a set without a coupon. Oh, they're just the loveliest things!" Here Mrs. Mirabeau broke into a hysterical scream, and jumping up and down she clapped her hands. "Oh, I'm just tickled to death with them!"

Mr. Mirabeau agreed that their beauty was beyond words, and that maybe, after all, his wife was not far from right in buying another set, for they were certainly dirt cheap.

Then the question arose as to just what they would do with them. For the past eight years Mr. Mirabeau had subscribed to a popular weekly magazine, buying it not so much for the stories as for the advertisements it contained and because he considered it

to be a big nickel's worth. These magazines had been carefully preserved, a corner of the room being set aside for them, and Mr. Mirabeau was struck with the brilliant idea of stacking them between the book-ends.

This plan, however, proved futile; for the magazines were quite large and stubbornly refused to stand up. Overcome with anger Mr. Mirabeau abandoned the project and turned in dismay to his wife. It was then decided that at the first sale they heard of they would buy some books. In fact, Mr. Mirabeau determined to visit a bookstore on the following day and look around. His wife insisted that he buy nothing without first consulting her, and to this he agreed. Then they had dinner and Mr. Mirabeau listened to the radio concert.

II

THE next day, during his lunch period, Mr. Mirabeau paid a visit to a nearby bookstore. Here, displayed in tempting array, were thousands and thousands of tomes; big and little, new and second-hand, bought, sold, or exchanged. Mr. Mirabeau was overwhelmed; he was veritably drowned in the sea of books; he floundered hopelessly and finally succumbed. He selected five volumes, choosing those with the most highly colored and attractive jackets. Mr. Mirabeau was not one of those crabbed bookworms, with certain pet authors whom they venerate; he was a pure and simple book buyer, who bought, unprejudiced, those books which looked the most interesting, regardless of who had written them.

"Whew! Good-night!" exclaimed Mr. Mirabeau, as he fumbled among the books. "Who'd have thought it!"

First he picked out a detective yarn called "The Mystery of the Blue Diamond," the picture on the jacket alone almost causing a shiver to run up and down his spine. He then selected an enticing looking love story, which was followed by an adventurous tale of a man who was half ape. A Wall Street story and a volume about New

York's underworld made up his collection, and rushing back to work he found that he had stayed out twenty-five minutes over his allotted time.

That night Mr. Mirabeau had a surprise for his wife. She was at first vexed with him for having spent so much money, but on examining the purchases more closely her anger subsided. They partook of a hasty dinner, and afterward settled down for an evening with the books. For a while Mr. Mirabeau tried to listen to the radio and read at the same time, but he found that it couldn't be done. An ordeal followed in which the radio gave way to its new opponent, but not without a struggle.

Mr. Mirabeau's wife was already immersed in the love story, and he started out on the detective yarn. The evening paper was scarcely looked at—a strange thing, indeed, for that household—and the dishes were left unwashed. It was here, at this point, that the Mirabeaus began their gradual and ultimate disintegration.

Mr. Mirabeau read on and on. He followed Craig Gordan, the miraculous detective, through ceilings and over housetops, into basements and through sewers, up dark alleys and half way round the world. "A truly remarkable fellow—this detective;" thought Mr. Mirabeau, "nothing short of a real genius."

At eleven o'clock Mrs. Mirabeau tried to coax her husband to retire. It was after their regular bedtime, and, although deeply engrossed in the love story, she was becoming sleepy. Mr. Mirabeau, however, was far too enraptured to give in, but he promised his wife to follow her as soon as he had reached the hundred and fiftieth page.

For the next two hours, at an interval of about every ten minutes, Mrs. Mirabeau called to her husband to come to bed. Mr. Mirabeau finally became angry and harshly commanded his wife to shut up and go to sleep. A volley of hasty words ensued, which increased in tone and rapidity until someone in the apartment above them violently thumped on the floor. Then Mrs. Mira-

beau became silent and sank into a peaceful slumber.

"Good God! You can't trust nobody nowadays," said Mr. Mirabeau, at three o'clock, after he had finished the book and found that a poor old obscure Chinese servant was dragged out and proved guilty of the theft and three murders. "Whew! Who'd a' thought that Chink stole the diamond!" And he slammed down the book with such a vehement force that he awakened his wife, who was amidst a pleasant dream in which she was being vigorously embraced by the gallant hero of the love story.

"Put out that light and come to bed," virtually shouted Mrs. Mirabeau, which caused the thumping on the ceiling to resume. "We'll have a devil of a light bill to pay!"

"Shut up! Shut up! I'm coming," said Mr. Mirabeau, and shortly after he climbed in beside her.

III

THE next morning Mr. Mirabeau overslept, and by the time he got up it was so late that he decided to take the day off—a thing which he seldom did. The time was mostly spent in reading, and long after midnight had passed Mr. Mirabeau was still perusing the story of a humble Wall Street messenger-boy who became metamorphosed into a great stock-broker with a seat on the Exchange.

Mr. Mirabeau then became an ardent book reader. After he had finished with the initial five volumes he bought more, and later on he took to exchanging them. One might have seen him most any noon, browsing around in the bookstore, or perhaps standing in front of the window with his lips moving as he read the titles.

The people at the office began to notice a change in him. He was entirely different from the alert and efficient Mirabeau of old. He came to work blear-eyed and sleepy looking, and more than once he was observed to be dozing over his desk. Everyone shook their heads and

all agreed that something was radically affecting him. Some suspected that he was working elsewhere at night—holding down two jobs—and this aroused the jealousy of the whole staff.

Besides, Mr. Mirabeau seemed to act so strange. He looked at everybody in such a mistrustful way, and on several occasions he was heard to mumble: "You don't know who to suspect nowadays." People finally began to shun Mr. Mirabeau. A few felt rather sorry for him, but none were willing to associate with so peculiar and questionable a person.

So far, in the stories which he read, Mr. Mirabeau had found all the heroes to be really heroic and all the villains to be really villainous. But one day, when he was picking out some books, he chanced upon "Victory" and "Lord Jim" side by side on the shelf, and mistaking them for spicy and adventurous stories of the sea he bought them.

Was it that the momentum gathered by Mr. Mirabeau carried him into the midst of Conrad's sea of doubt? How, indeed, did he manage to hunch and clamber through Marlowe's leisurely recounting of irrelevant anecdote? But, however that may have come about, there is no doubt that it happened. In the course of a few days Mr. Mirabeau's system of categories was as obsolete as honesty in a democratic state; and he was hard put to find another to replace it. That there was another he felt quite sure; but to find it, and that as quickly as possible—that was the prime need!

Meanwhile, he must content himself with a pillow of doubt—or try to content himself; he felt immediately that he would never succeed. He worried along, reading avidly whenever he could find time to do so, that he might come the sooner to the new dispensation which, he thought, must certainly be present somewhere among those puzzling pages.

The days passed in a sort of vague haze for Mr. Mirabeau. He sat bewildered at his desk with his head buzzing and spinning, and made mistake

after mistake. Then, when he called over a fellow from a nearby desk, and pulling him up close, said, in a peculiar hissing tone, shaking his head: "Max do you know that we don't know what?" it became rumored about the office that he was completely crazy—gone plumb nuts, as they phrased it.

"What?" Max had asked.

"We don't know who's who or what's what," was the answer he received. "You, me, nor anybody knows. It's all the same; nobody knows what's which or why."

Max was frankly puzzled, and quickly edged away.

Mr. Mirabeau then began the last phase of his fearful retrogradation. He became careless and walked on the wrong side of the sidewalk, a thing which he never used to do, and he quit keeping a daily expense account. He grew increasingly indifferent to his work, and spent money on books like one possessed. In short, he was no longer the dependable, methodical, good citizen of yesterday.

He bought volume after volume, indiscriminately, in his efforts to counteract the effect of those two unfathomable books; but he could find no antidote. The detective yarns, which he loved so well, solved nothing, so far as the deadly two were concerned; nor were the love stories in any sense revealing. The doubt which clung about Heyst and Lord Jim was beyond their reach. Mr. Mirabeau cursed the day he had bought the book-ends. He was happy then; to-day he was miserable.

He could find no one to sympathize with the inarticulate chaos within his once orderly soul. He tried hard enough to make himself understood, but nobody would listen to him. They had

no time for such nonsense, such monkey-business; there was too much work in the world to be done. Besides, he had better be careful with that sort of talk; it was dangerous and sooner or later it would land him in either the jail or the bughouse.

Mr. Mirabeau's wife was just planning to leave him, for his incoherent mysticism was slowly driving her to distraction, when one day the manager called him into his office. Here he was severely reprimanded, and told that if he jumbled and messed up things again he would immediately be fired.

"You used to be a good man, Mirabeau. What's got into you lately? You're no damned good any longer. Now tell me what's the matter with you?"

Mr. Mirabeau gulped down a lump in his throat and pathetically gaped at his boss. Finally he stammered out: "We don't know what's what or who's who. A hero may be a villain, and—and—and it may be just the other way round."

The manager was dumbfounded. He looked at him in amazement and shouted, "Get out! We don't want you! We haven't got time for that twaddle around here! Get the hell out! Here's your money!" And he threw an envelope at him, which, evidently, he had made up in advance.

Mr. Mirabeau picked up his money and hazily made his way to the street. A week later his wife started divorce proceedings. To her he had become utterly incorrigible; a worthless and aggravating fool; a blundering and stupid ass.

"I'm glad I'm shut of him," she said, with manifest relief, on the day of parting; and the Mirabeaus separated forever.



L'Enfant Miserable

By John Torcross

I

IN perpetual fear of being punished for it knows not what, constantly being deceived and lied to, wilfully kept in ignorance of life's most vital issues, a thing of false pity and of pseudo-sympathy—a child.

II

Uniformity is the one quality essential to the modern child. Let it once diverge from the general run of its fellow beings and the unfortunate is acclaimed rattle-brained, strange, a thing of ridicule.

III

The fact that a child is unable to select its own parents is no reflection upon the child.

IV

The early training of a child is almost wholly one of negation. Continually instructed that it "mustn't do this" and that it "may not do that," a point is ultimately arrived at when the little one, be it of the flimsiest of character, will up and flatly refuse further to tolerate the flim-flam of its immediate progenitors.

V

The great majority of those things that a child is taught to revere and respect are the very ones that it later learns to laugh at.

VI

Surely it is small wonder that the modern child ever achieves the slightest sense of proportion when one pauses to consider its most intimate associates; impractical mothers, illiterate nurse-maids, and other children.

VII

After all, it seems only fit that a parent should deceive, cajole, and lie to its offspring. Otherwise the parent is very apt to be found out.

VIII

Childhood's ambitions are seldom realized. This is due not so much to a change of point of view and desire as to the mythical existence of what a child is taught.

IX

How much more understanding of life is the average child than the average adult! The fact that the magic, the color, the wonder of a thing may all be unreal makes but little difference to the child. The effect is sufficient. And it is for effect, after all, that the average adult strives.



The Romance of a Gargoyle

By L. M. Hussey

I

STANDING in presidency over her fortune, a perverse fate impressed the face and person of Miss Bowling with a die of unloveliness. As a little girl she was attainted by those ill-favored characteristics which were subsequently emphasized by the years. Thus, as she entered upon adolescence, the fugitive bloom of youth was sullied by the leathern opacity of her skin, the inordinate breadth and projection of her nose, the pallor of her lips and an increasing lack of agreeable curves to the outlines of her body. She was, they said of her, a homely girl, but in these early days there still were hopes of redemption.

For a time little Gertrude was unaware that she was far less comely than her friends and companions. Now and then she would envy another child for the golden brightness of her hair, or another for the sweetness of her smile but she had no suspicion that she, above all, was wanting in every enviable favor. This hideous truth was made apparent to her by a misadventure which awakened her, with startled eyes, to the perception of her own unloveliness.

When Gertrude had just passed the age of twelve, she fell in love with a boy who sat in the bench adjacent to her own at school. Prior to this she had heard much talk of beaux, both among the girls of her own age and the slightly older girls. It was held as an axiom that a beau was desirable, although the possession of

one entailed the endurance of jibes and teasing remarks, half enviously spoken. She herself had presently resolved to secure the attachment of some personable youth with whom she could experience the felicities already won by some of her intimates.

These pleasures were of a formal, or ceremonial, nature. For example, an early part of the ritual was the exchange of significant bits of colored ribbon. After the preliminary approaches had been made, the boy received from his fair one an envelope or a folded bit of tablet paper containing one small piece of red ribbon and one small piece of a similar ribbon colored blue. Within, on a separate sheet, were written these verses:

*If for me your love is true
Send me back this bow of blue.
If for me your love is dead
Send me back the bow of red.*

If the boy was complacent, he forthwith returned the blue ribbon. On the other hand, certain of the hardier or rowdy spirits, contemptuous of these seductions, besmirched the symbolic ribbons by such indignities as dipping them in the ink-well or penciling them with a derisory rejection.

The boy who made return of the blue ensign was thereafter bound to certain duties and services. He was required to meet his beloved outside the school-yard and carry home her books, departing from her at the corner of her street in order that his attentions might not be observed by her mother or other family inquisitors.

The boy upon whom Gertrude set

her affections was not, at the moment, engaged by any other little girl. Indeed, he was not a prepossessing boy. Perhaps, through an unconscious recognition of her own deficiencies, Gertrude selected him as one less likely to frustrate her by a critical disparagement. Her infatuation came abruptly. It happened one afternoon during a study period.

Enthroned before her desk, the teacher sat in an austere silence, rustling the sheets of a history examination which had been concluded in the morning. Every pupil had a book opened upon the top of his or her bench and there was a general pretence of study. Some of the boys stared with fixed eyes at the opened pages while they dreamed of an approaching liberation. Others scratched meaningless designs upon the marred surfaces of the desks with the blades of adroitly concealed penknives. One youth, abandoning the sham of studious attention, sat slouched in his bench with a countenance of grievous boredom. The pupils tittered, grimaced, and exchanged slips of paper upon which were inscribed messages of no consequence. One little girl, surreptitiously chewing upon a savorless piece of gum, permitted herself the occasional but dangerous luxury of suddenly projected bubbles that exploded betwixt her lips with the noise of a stopper withdrawn from a flask. In general the girls were self-conscious, plucked at their frocks, patted their hair with deft fingers and attained to poses of haughty indifference.

For a time Gertrude had read and reread certain sentences of the book before her without any perception of their meaning. Her mind dwelt on other concerns. Two days before, she had concluded the perusal of what seemed to her a very sweet book she had discovered in her aunt's library. This book was a novel and a love story, a tale with a very happy ending. The hero was one who abased himself before the heroine

with innumerable speeches wherein he related his own unworthiness.

By this book Gertrude's imagination had been touched like tinder to a flame. To her it seemed the crest of delight to be so extravagantly adored. She wished to mimic the life of that heroine and to stand like her in the presence of one who would speak with similar accents of abounding worship. She longed for added years, to be grown up in an instant that she might live in the daily expectancy of this delight. Then her eyes fell upon Ralph Marshall, who sat in the opposite bench.

Now young Gertrude was not imaginative enough to see in Ralph the fictional lover of adult desire. But, influenced by her precocious dreams, she did perceive the pleasure of being attended to and from the school like many of the other girls and she was abruptly awakened to all the clandestine delight that one might experience in exchanging bits of colored ribbon, sentimental verses, secret messages, and covert avowals.

She examined the countenance of Ralph. His aspect was not heroic. His face was pale and somewhat pinched and about his recessive chin there was an unmanly irresolution.

She felt a bit of contempt for him and yet, feeling this, she was assured. Ralph would be docile and easily managed. She conceived him already in the guise of an obedient slave. She could dominate him pitilessly. Her dominance would arouse the envy of other girls whose chosen sweethearts were more boisterously of their own minds. Gertrude smiled to herself. Then, catching the boy's eye, she smiled at him.

Unhappily, her inviting smile was detected by one of the rude, derisive boys quartered on one of the rear seats. This boy, whose name was Martin, watched the subsequent exchanges between Gertrude and Ralph with an avid interest. Such a youth as Ralph was to Martin a legitimate victim, whom he might exploit for

purposes of derision. With a fixed grin he watched Gertrude as she furtively passed a slip of folded paper across the narrow aisle.

Upon this paper she had written: "Do you like me?"

Ralph colored as he read it, hesitated, discovered himself under the persuasion of a stronger will, and wrote down the affirmative word, "Yes."

At this juncture the affair remained in suspension, since the teacher rapped on her desk and called for order. The results of the examination were read out, the dismissal bell clanged in the hall, and the class crowded into the restricted dressing-room whence the scholars emerged with their caps and school-bags.

Young Ralph lingered dubiously and as Gertrude passed him she touched his arm and whispered,

"I'll meet you around the corner, Ralph."

Meanwhile, Martin had hurried to an outer freedom where he acquainted a group of hardy spirits, immune to amorous seduction, that Ralph Marshall was in love with Gertrude Bowling.

When Ralph appeared in the school-yard he fell into an ambush. Eight or ten boys, captained by Martin, danced and postured about him with extravagant ejaculations.

"Ralph's in love! Oh my!" cried one.

"Ain't he sweet!"

"She won't like you if you don't straighten your cap, Ralph!"

"Ralph Marshall kisses girls! Ralph Marshall kisses girls!"

Fringed about the larger boys was an importunate throng of smaller lads who cavorted with mimetic antics. Ralph was jostled and pushed until tears filled his eyes. He bit his lips in shame. His denials were to no purpose, for whenever he spoke his voice was drowned in an augmented clamor. As he walked across the school-yard he was followed by his tormenters. One small boy snatched

off his cap and flung it in the air, thereafter scuttling away like a rabbit.

Ralph began to run and for a time the others followed upon his heels like the hounds of a chase. But presently they tired of this exercise and young Ralph, panting, weeping, gasping inarticulately, subsided into a walk. He thought of Gertrude Bowling and he hated her. He knew that she was waiting on a nearby corner and he hoped that she would wait for hours and that something calamitous would befall her as the punishment for her pertinacity. Reaching his own street, he stood on the pavement plucking at his corduroy trousers in a sort of futile rage. His unfledged æsthetic faculty sufficed to inform him that Gertrude Bowling was an ugly girl, a girl whose nose was too large, whose eyes were too small, whose mouth was shapeless, whose hair was dank and whose movements were without grace.

"I hate her," he said to himself. "I hate her!" he repeated.

Little Gertrude waited on the corner and when Ralph failed to appear she persuaded herself that a misunderstanding had prevented his coming.

She was disappointed, but she walked home in a felicitous mood. She indulged agreeable thoughts of the morrow. She thought of Ralph but she did not perceive him in his actual semblance. Gertrude was playing at grown-up emotions. Ralph was no more than a symbol whom she endowed with qualities of fantastic heroism. She imagined speeches from his lips that she knew he would never speak. She was happy; she smiled in happiness.

The next morning she went early to school, lingered about the almost deserted school-yard and then, hoping that Ralph was waiting for her in the school-room, she hurried indoors. The school-room was empty.

The boys and girls straggled in, but the final bell clanged before Ralph appeared. He walked to his bench

with downcast eyes and Gertrude wondered at his deportment. During the entire period of the first session he refused to meet her gaze. At recess he was out of the dressing-room before she could accost him. But in the yard she approached him and as she drew near, Martin and his followers closed in upon the pair.

"Here she is!" shouted Martin. "Here's your dear sweet Gertrude!"

Ralph Marshall stamped his small foot in rage. Once more the salt tears brimmed his eyes. He grimaced at Gertrude and cried out, with trembling lips:

"Go away from me! I don't like you! I hate you!"

As if she were a flower upon which was breathed a sudden vapor of withering torridity, the little girl wilted in dismay. Then the other boys shouted with pitiless derision. They flung their caps into the air and pranced like demons. Shrinking, the girl turned and walked toward the door of the schoolhouse. As she manoeuvred this retreat the spirit of young Ralph flared like a newly kindled flame. He exulted as if he had accomplished an heroic deed. He clinched his victory by shouting after her,

"You're ugly! You're as ugly as mud!"

II

Now it was through these words shouted after her by little Ralph Marshall that Gertrude was smitten with an entire consciousness of her own deficiencies. Of course she was a child then and with the flexibility of a child's emotions she was shortly enabled to forget the acute sting of his words. But they took root in the secret chambers of her mind and like malign weeds they grew and persisted there. As she grew older she saw plainly that to her had been denied the common physical advantages of other girls. Almost every girl, however plain, possessed some

trifling turn of feature, some little device of speech, or even a trick of gesture of no apparent consequence that made her agreeable in the eyes of men. And yet, when she examined herself, Miss Bowling was unable to discover the assurance of a single seduction.

Then, as she grew older, Miss Bowling grew in contempt for the charms of other women. This was her defence, this was her armor, through which life became endurable. She accentuated her own uncomeliness by the use of severe costumes and when she went out to business she walked the streets with a masculine stride, attired in tailored suits that concealed none of her imperfect curves. She twisted her hair into an unlovely knot that perched like a pudding on the back of her head and since her hair was drawn back tautly, there was a tenseness about the skin of her forehead. Her hands were large and in the winter she wore thick woolen gloves.

Having graduated from a business school, she obtained employment in a large office as a stenographer. The other stenographers, young creatures with bobbed hair and alluring shirt-waists, regarded her with amusement, while Miss Bowling, in her turn, eyed the other stenographers with emotions of venomous contempt. She sniffed the perfumes with which they were besprinkled as if these were the effluvia of some malodorous decay. Lifting her shiny nose in the air she asserted her superiority with unmistakable grimaces. And in one respect she proved her claim to pre-eminence since, in her work, she was presently distinguished by a higher efficiency.

Miss Bowling was now alone in the world. Her aunt had died and she lived in a room downtown, not far from her work. The temper of this young woman was such that she made no friends and her life was passed alone. She did not even know another like herself with whom she

might have found a community of acidulous thought. In the evenings, after she had dined in a cheap restaurant, she used to sit in her room and think disparagingly of the girls in the office. She subjected each one to a critical inventory that aspersed not only the countenances, persons and habits of her separate victims, but scandalously dissected their thoughts, their lives and their private acts until, in the mind of Miss Bowling, there was not a stenographer or girl clerk in her place of employment who possessed a shred of character.

As time went on her vilifications of the employees took on the aspect of a secret gratification, a vicarious indulgence of the flesh. She blushed when she thought of Miss Harper, her eyes dilated as she mused upon the deplorable diversions of Winifred Powers, and as for little Miss Clarke, to meditate her possible recreations was evocative of so much that was shameful that Miss Bowling, albeit in loathing, returned to the thought of her again and again.

She used to watch the little Clarke girl as they worked together in the office. Every gesture of this creature was significant. To Miss Bowling even her face flaunted a brazen immodesty and her smiles were shamelessly seductive. A new male clerk came to work in the office and presently he was observed to make friends with Miss Clarke. Gertrude watched this pair avidly and finally, one evening, when she observed them leave the office in company she shook her head grimly in significant affirmation.

Without sweetening the acridity of her judgments upon the girls, she came to the ultimate opinion that their lamentable weaknesses were exploited by the men, young and old, with whom they came into contact.

Then, in the secrecy of her room, Miss Bowling began to meditate upon masculine villainies. She even began to find the girls in a measure com-miserable when she reflected how, in their weakness, they were made the

prey of the innumerable satyrs that stalked about in the guise of honorable masculinity. These new thoughts appalled and thrilled her. Within the loneliness of her room, and in her spinster's isolation, she expanded them until they grew like tumors upon her meditations.

Thus Miss Bowling's life acquired a tincture of perverse excitement. She carried her beliefs into the street and as she walked unattended through the crowds she conceived herself in danger. In her new belief that men were inordinate pursuers of her kind, she forgot her own unloveliness. She trembled when a man, even a senile man, stood near her in the street car or disposed himself in the same seat.

On one occasion, when she had been out rather late, she imagined herself pursued, because a young man had descended from the car at the same corner and walked somewhat behind her. She had observed this fellow as he sat in the car and to Miss Bowling his features were the betraying mask of an evil soul. When she arose at her corner she perceived with a tremulous start that he also had arisen. As she stepped to the curb she heard his weightier tread behind her. And although she quickened her pace he seemed to accelerate his own, so that she could not gain upon his pursuit.

The imminence of her danger, as she conceived it, set her heart to pounding wildly and she felt the reflected impulse of its agitation in the throbbing at her temples. She had now withdrawn from the light of the corner arc and she walked in shadows. Would it avail anything to scream, to cry out? A cry of despair surged to her lips, but by a curious instinct she repressed it. This man, inexorable in his pursuit, was gaining upon her. In a moment he would reach and seize her, and since the street was deserted, she knew not what might happen.

Then, at the summit of her emotional despair, Miss Bowling was

visited by an odd weakness, a strange yielding. Through her veins was suffused an unfamiliar warmth as if she had then and there partaken of some intoxicating elixir. She surrendered herself to the inevitable, she abandoned the flight, and waiting for the satyr's arms to enfold her, she stood motionless upon the sidewalk.

He came behind her, his step resounded in her ears—and he passed. He said nothing, he did not even turn his head, and with parched lips and blurred vision Miss Bowling stared after him as his form contracted in diminishing perspective.

She stumbled on to the lodging house, crept up the stairs to her room, but afterward, as she lay in bed, it was a long time before sleep came to her.

III

It is through the hints afforded by these precursory emotions and events that we must understand and interpret the strange delusion of Miss Bowling in relation to her employer, Mr. Dutton.

Upon the retirement of the senior member from active participation in the business, young Mr. Dutton was recalled from Chicago to preside over the local offices. Soon after his arrival Miss Bowling was advanced to the post of his stenographer.

She had earned this recognition of her ability. She was notably more accurate and efficient than the other girls. Miss Bowling could spell and punctuate correctly and, moreover, she was neat and expeditious. The office manager did not hesitate to recommend her to Mr. Dutton as the most suitable young woman to whom he might give his dictation.

When young Dutton first met Miss Bowling he was somewhat aghast at her unloveliness. That evening, in conversing with his pretty wife, he said:

"Well, Laura, you used to be jealous of poor Miss Richardson in

Chicago, but after you get one look at the stenographer they've given me in this office you'll find that you needn't be perturbed so long as we remain here."

Laura Dutton, widening her lustrous ebon eyes, bestowed upon her young husband a glance of penetrating suspicion.

"Since you're in charge," she said, "I suppose you can pick out any stenographer you want. Really, it's a little suspicious that you take the trouble to tell me about your new one so quickly. I'll have to come down to the office and have a look at this girl!"

"As far as choosing her goes," answered Dutton, who when he was not annoyed found amusement in his wife's inveterate jealousy, "that function I gave over to the office manager, who knew more about the capabilities of the girls than myself. And I wish you would come and satisfy yourself about poor Miss Bowling, although I warn you, dear, that she is not pictorial. And Laura, when will you learn that business, at least as it is run in a great corporation such as ours, is a serious affair? The executives of our Company choose their women assistants on the basis of their ability, not according to the standards one might set for picking the chorus for the 'Follies.' And then you're much too sweet yourself for me to ever—"

She repelled him by an urgent gesture.

"Don't muss me up now. And anyway, I don't believe you at all. I know what men are! I know what you are, Lawrence Dutton!"

Next day, as Dutton sat in his office delivering his dictation to the uncomely Miss Bowling, it amused him to recall the suspicions of his wife. He even felt like commiserating this young woman upon her disastrous want of charm. He had never seen a less attractive girl. Or was she a girl? Her age was indeterminate, for although her old complexion

denied the possibility of youth, there was nevertheless something vaguely youthful in her presence. However, Dutton found himself unable to gaze too long upon Miss Bowling's face and continuing to speak, he turned his eyes to the window.

Meanwhile, Gertrude took down his words with a sort of instinctive accuracy, although her thoughts wandered far from the dry substance of the letters he composed. Although her hand was steady, moving swiftly across the paper as she transcribed his words into stenographic characters, she suffered from a curious inward tremor. For the first time in her business experience she sat alone, in a private office, with a man.

That evening, sitting in her room, she meditated elaborately upon her new position. She saw again the countenance of Mr. Dutton, his smiling lips, his black eyes, his ruddy cheeks. Why did he smile? Why was he pleasant? Suddenly she divined a threat in his gracious demeanor. She knew that tomorrow she would be called again into the secrecy of that private room. She would sit alone with Mr. Dutton once more. She shivered with abrupt terror and in the same moment she was thrilled with perverse delight. Her deep suspicion of Mr. Dutton became confirmed as she recalled his almost caressing geniality. Then Miss Bowling felt herself as one entrapped.

She entered the private office next morning, having received her employer's summons, with a harsh determination to repel his illegitimate advances. Mr. Dutton, she had learned, was a married man. And of all men, according to her belief, married men were the most deplorable.

He sat at his desk and he smiled at her as she entered. She did not return his smile. She seated herself sternly, and yet with an inner trepidation, at his side. He began to speak and she to transcribe his words. And while he spoke Miss Bowling was conscious of his black eyes as they

rested upon her. His gaze seemed to burn into her flesh as if his eyes focused upon her a double beam of searing light. He came to the conclusion of the first letter. She heard him rustling the papers upon his desk and without looking up she waited for him to resume. She did not venture a glance at his face, because she dwelt in the sudden conviction that should she raise her eyes to his own she would provoke him beyond restraint. And at the same time, believing this, she conquered the dreadful impulse to chance such a provocation only by an heroic resolution.

Dutton, wholly unconscious of Miss Bowling's perturbation, shuffled the morning's correspondence between his fingers, glanced through the letters, and cogitated his replies. He was a bit indifferent this morning, and his attention was distracted by vague noises in the outer office. He knew that Miss Bowling was waiting, but then, it was her function to wait or to work, according to his pleasure. His mind was devoid of any thought of her as his gaze rested idly upon her lowered head. A tepid air entered through the open window and he thought of the country club, the golf course, the chaffing talk of the locker room, and he determined to complete his work seasonably and hurry out for an afternoon of diversion. He smiled a little.

Meanwhile, Miss Bowling waited. She waited with an augmenting fear. Afraid to raise her eyes, she could not understand her employer's delay. Then she grew instinctively conscious of his eyes as they once more dwelt upon her face. She felt a responding warmth slowly mount her cheeks until they were crimson with blushes. She knew now that her only defense would be to raise her face and confront the evil purpose of this man with a face of blazing rejection. And she could not bring herself to this swift gesture of denial. She found herself helpless and yielding. There was no sound in the

closed room, for even the sibilant noise of her breathing seemed vanquished by this oppressive confinement.

It was at this moment that Miss Bowling, the unlovely girl, the girl whose emotions were warped by a parched insufficiency, experienced her strange delusion. It seemed to her, on an amazing instant, that Mr. Dutton bent suddenly forward and imprinted upon her lips a shamefully burning kiss.

She sprang from her chair in frantic alarm. Her cheeks glowed with this outrage upon her immaculate reserve. With the back of her hand she rubbed the imagined kiss from her dry lips.

"Brute!" she exclaimed. "Let me go! Don't touch me! Don't dare to come near me! Let me out of this office!"

Aroused from his musings upon a forthcoming afternoon of pleasure, scarcely comprehending the words of his stenographer, the astounded young man watched as Miss Bowling ran toward the door and disappeared into the outer office.

IV

OF course Miss Bowling immediately left her employment, yet in spite of this her fears were not allayed. It seemed to her that the brute Dutton would ultimately discover her in her own lodgings and there exact the dreadful sequel to his premonitory kiss. At night a creaking upon the stairs would arouse her to a listening terror, for it seemed to her that Dutton must have gained midnight entrance to the house, burglariously no doubt, and was about to enter her room where she waited in defenseless alarm. And curiously enough, mingled with her fears, was a vague stir of expectation.

Then as her fear declined her anger took increase. A man who afforded himself such a dastardly advantage over the defenseless should be made to pay. Miss Bowling sought re-

quital for the ill that had been done her. She conceived the notion of legal redress and finally she consulted a lawyer.

One morning Miss Bowling's lawyer waited upon young Mr. Dutton in his office.

"I come on behalf of Miss Bowling," he said.

"Miss Bowling? I can't understand what I have to do with Miss Bowling!"

Gertrude's lawyer spread out his hands in an amicable gesture of expostulation.

"Naturally, I didn't intend to force from you any admission, Mr. Dutton," he said. "All that will be proven in court, if need be. My idea has been, however, that you would much prefer a settlement of this trouble out of court. It would be so unpleasantly notorious. You have, for instance, your family to consider. The unpleasant publicity that would be given you in the newspapers would surely be undesirable from the standpoint of Mrs. Dutton. We're both men here, talking together now, and I'm not blaming you for anything, Mr. Dutton. . . ."

The lawyer paused and his gaze, instead of conveying blame, seemed to imply his admiration for the young man's singular courage.

"At the same time," he added, "I will most assuredly act for the best interests of my client."

Young Dutton's impulse was to lift this leering solicitor by the slack of his trousers and catapult him into the outer office. From the commission of this disastrous outrage he restrained himself only with profound difficulty. He firmly believed himself the victim of a most abominable conspiracy, but when he recalled the character of his wife he felt his belligerency wilt like a starched garment against a perspirious skin. He felt like wringing his hands and gnashing his teeth in impotent rage. Laura would never believe him! His inadvertent mention of Miss Bowling

had already aroused her irrepressible suspicions. It would be worth any possible price to keep the knowledge of this affair from her ears. That his former stenographer's assertions were groundless was of no moment. She could, nevertheless, involve him in a most scandalous publicity. And however thoroughly he might be exonerated in any court of law, he would stand forever guilty before the judgment of his wife.

So in the end the unfortunate Mr. Dutton made over a sum of money to Miss Bowling's lawyer. The lawyer shared this meticulously with Miss Bowling, taking half for himself. Then Gertrude, resolute in her determination to repel, as she had in the past repelled, any threat to her vir-

ginal integrity, sought and found other employment. Fortunately for her unwitting employers, she was never called into a private office to receive dictation from a satyristic man. The romance of her life began and ended in the office of Lawrence Dutton.

But often, and for many years, she used to think of this shameful moment as she dwelt in the lonely seclusion of her room. The face of Mr. Dutton would return to her and then Miss Bowling would cry out:

"The brute! The brute!"

And then, flinging herself upon the bed, pressing her face into the pillow, she would strive to renew upon her arid lips the impression of his imagined kiss.



To Time

By Lynn Riggs

*TIME, deal kindly with me, let me be
Full of a wise inefficiency.*

*Let me continue, as now, to delight in
Flowers that fade and willows that whiten.*

*Let me be careless when I should be
Knitting my brows in perplexity.*

*And always, O Time, let me be wide awake
For proud ones who fall for a shadow's sake.*



BIGAMY—the art of making two men pay where only one paid before.



FRIENDSHIP between two women means they have something in common. Usually he is handsome, has curly hair and the ability to lie gracefully to both of them.



The Club

By Charles G. Shaw

YOU will observe in the hall—usually on the left—a figure that, at first, appears to be part of the furnishings. But it is not. It is merely Old John, who has decorated the hall for thirty-seven years. His face is expressionless, his voice low, his manners perfect. He greets you with a “Good-day, Mr. . . .,” if you be one of the members. If not, a “Whom do you wish to see, sir?” His movements are wholly mechanical and no matter what be the situation, the slightest suggestion of surprise in his demeanor is unknown. A few feet to the right of John is the coat-room. It is indistinguishable from thousands of other coat-rooms—impersonal to a degree of dulness. The checks are of brass and bear the name of the club in striking black letters. The attendant is a non-descript youth who is customarily changed at an average of seven and a half times a year. He is engaged with yesterday’s newspaper.

Continuing along the hall, you will happen upon the smoking-room. Its walls are covered with Fores’ racing prints, a number of dry point etchings, two shelves of pewter mugs, and photographs of yachts, dogs and deceased members. A mounted brook-trout adorns that section of the room just above the door. All the chairs are heavily upholstered in dark brown leather and the carpet is of a deep maroon. In addition to an anæmic-looking menial who is feebly dusting off the bronze bust of the first president of the club, the room contains Colonel Buff, a red-faced octogenarian who glares and sniffs at

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all who enter. He is outraged at the slightest sound and bounces about in his chair to register his disapproval. His conversation consists wholly of complaints and he is forever scribbling letters to the House Committee, objecting to the brand of soap used in the wash-room. Buff smokes very long and excessively bad cigars, the ashes of which he invariably spills all over his chocolate-colored whipcord waistcoat.

Immediately opposite is a sort of reading and writing room combined. Placards bearing the word “Silence” are scattered throughout it and the window shades are drawn. On the side-tables, against the walls, are lamps that cast a ghostly glow. This is a room that is seldom used. It was formerly the bar.

The card-room is further on and is equally unconducive to festivity and frolic. It is illuminated with drop-lights and the baize-covered tables are fitted with ash-trays. A bridge score-pad and perfectly sharpened pencil occupy the precise center of each. On the mantel a neat notice announces that all entries for the annual bridge tournament will close on the fourteenth of the following month. The single occupant of the card-room is a pallid old man who is playing Solitaire Canfield. He already owes himself two dollars and thirty-eight cents.

In the hall, outside, cast a peep at the bulletin-board. Within its glass cover, thumbtacked to the cork background, are two carefully penned cards, one announcing the death of George W. Postlewatts in his seventy-

ninth year and the other stating that I. Clarkson Tilley has been elected to the Board of Governors. A telegram from the Lakeside Club says that the skating is excellent.

The cigar-stand is nearby; it is scrupulously tidy, thoroughly equipped and altogether unattractive. Next to it is the desk, or bureau, which is presided over by a gray-haired man who wears a look of disappointment. His time is passed in cashing cheques, securing theatre tickets, arranging dinners and in being polite to the members. He has worn the same suit for eight years.

On an adjacent wall are posted the names of those who have been guilty of indebtedness since the fifteenth of the month and directly underneath is a notification to the effect that the consumption of intoxicating beverages within the club is strictly forbidden.

The bonanza of the next floor is the lounge—a spacious chamber, wainscotted in oak paneling. Huge divans are strewn about it and an enormous fireplace occupies the far end. On a massive centre-table are neatly arranged newspapers and periodicals. Old Man Bakeley embellishes an easy chair in a corner near the window. He is sound asleep and has been in that condition for several hours. Fallen on the floor, at his feet, is a dog's-eared copy of *La Vie Parisienne*. In another part of the room is transpiring a discussion between Blodgett and Hendricks on the proposition of Prohibition. Blodgett says "the whole business is a damned outrage" while Hendricks "doesn't possibly see how it's going to last much longer." They have both reiterated these briefs every day for the past ten months. Blodgett is sipping a split of Celestin Vichy.

To the left is the dining-room. Waiters with folded arms and long faces are stationed about it at regular intervals. A cloud of solemnity hangs over it and the silence is broken only

by the mumblings of a superannuated bachelor and a dipsomaniacal divorcé. The latter has come to the club by mistake, having completely forgotten his taxi that, outside, ticks away dime after dime.

The library is a room that is literally never used at all. The last member who was actually known to employ it was poor Puttywell, who, late one night, surrounded by several copies of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and a batch of love letters, blew off the top of his cranium with a Colt forty-four. Puttywell's ghost still seems to haunt the spot. A staircase leads off to the right—a staircase of bold design and of portentous propositions. Its banisters are filigreed and fluted; its steps are low and many. A strip of heavy Brussels carpet sets it off.

Above is the barber-shop where a sad-eyed Italiano passes his days amid musty magazines and despair. The Turkish bath has been closed for years.

If you ring vigorously and prepare to wait indefinitely, the elevator will ultimately appear and deposit you on the ground floor. Old John is still in the hall and he will probably nod sympathetically as you collect your divers habiliments. *En passant*, you may note the guest-room on the right. It contains various oils, in great gilt frames, of certain founders, trustees and donors of the club. There are also several straight-backed chairs, a plush-covered couch and a writing table. On the latter are two one-nibbed pens, a stack of club stationery and an empty match stand. In the drawer of the table is a blank cheque pad. The other outstanding feature of the room is a non-member who has been waiting to see old Vanderrick for three quarters of an hour. Vanderrick, himself, has not been inside the club for more than two weeks: he is, nevertheless, being paged in the library.

You proceed to the foyer and turn a knob. The ponderous, grilled doors

swing open and you find yourself, once more, a creature of the outside world of light and gladness. The stars in the soft sky above seem to wink at you and the merry moon smiles serenely. There is the laughter of eternal youth; there is the glamor of life-long enchantment. Somewhere you catch a strain of seductive music; somewhere you detect the tread of dancing; somewhere you hear another bottle being opened.



The Cloak of Dust

By Marjorie Allen Seiffert

A GOLDEN leaf, a silver leaf
as every word you spoke,
I gathered them about me
For a shining cloak.

I gathered them about me
And marveled how they shone,
I wrapped and warmed my doubtful heart
That hides all alone.

But pride on my head
Was like an iron crown,
When you would put my pride away
And let my hair down.

When you would put the pride away
That holds my head high,
So I might blindly follow you
And not ask why.

Out of my hiding heart
A hurt cry pressed
That came like a dead hand,
Cold against your breast.

A hushed cry, a strange cry
That shattered all your trust,
And every shining word of yours
Shivered into dust.



MEN like to make love as a mouse goes at a piece of cheese, gracefully nibbling at its edges on odd and occasional evenings, eternally hoping to escape the inevitable trap.



Revenge

By George F. Hummel

(Author of "After All")

I

OLD Man Hawkins had divided with his brother the remnants of what once had been the largest farm on the East End. For four generations the Hawkinses had grubbed among the rocks of their two hundred acre tract on Bennett's Point, raising scanty crops of corn and potatoes, pressing their cider and butchering their three hogs in the fall, carting their manure and killing their two calves in the spring, swinging slowly, year in and year out, around the inexorably fixed and narrow orbit of the East End farmer.

Women were scarce in Old Man Hawkins' great-great-grandfather's time, so he married his cousin. And in his great-grandfather's youth epidemics of grippe and scurvy had undermined husband and wife so that their progeny were a scrawny, shambling, shiftless lot.

This generation of Hawkinses gradually died off, as all the Hawkinses had died before them, of too much salt pork and too little fresh water. Old Man Hawkins' grandfather had sold the best part of the farm, thereby relieving himself of the disagreeable necessity of working during the latter part of his life. Hawkins' father had let the remainder go down for the most part to brambles and bayberry bushes. Late in life he too had wooed, won and wed a cousin, a washed-out, sickly spinster, who, when they were distributing gifts at Christmas from the tree in the Methodist Sunday-school answered to the name of Mary Alicia Temptation Price. Two boys, Will and Addick, were the result. On the death of their father

they had split the eighty acres of bayberry and boulders between them, divided the house in similar fashion and shouldered the heavy burden of the Hawkins' tradition.

Brother Will died of typhoid comparatively early in life and his share of the farm was sold to clear his debts and funeral expenses.

Addick Hawkins, by some odd freak of nature, early gave evidence of marked musical talent. He had bought himself a well-varnished fiddle on the instalment plan and passed many a long winter's evening scraping favorite Methodist lyrics, to the delight and edification of his audience and, principally, of himself.

Under his æsthetic régime the last remnant of the Hawkins farm went entirely to the bad. He had developed, along with his musical talents, a tendency to a phthisic which later became chronic. It kept him close to the kitchen stove in winter and close to a certain locust tree in summer.

In short "Dead Ad," as he was known in the village, was not noted for any "git up and git," but rather for a good-natured, genial sort of all-around laziness and general dilapidation that made him the butt of village urchins and the theme of many a thrifty housewife's admonition. He became a village proverb.

Dead Ad Hawkins had a son, Phil. Phil's mother had lived in the Hawkins dirt long enough to bring Phil to his twelfth year. She had then, one day, developed a quinzey which ran into an empyema, and uncomplainingly, in her helpless, fatalistic manner, had deliquesced, at length, into pus.

Phil and Dead Ad continued on, cooking their meals, sweeping the kitchen and bedroom once or twice a year, patching up the leaks here and there, drinking rain water, growing poorer and poorer crops on the stony farm.

Phil wasn't exactly half-witted, nor, on the contrary, could he be called intelligent. He was, in fine, a dry-rotted chip of the old Hawkins' block.

II

ONE fine day in early summer Phil was raking hard clams down in Corey's creek. At noon he sat on the shore on the salt grass to enjoy a lunch of bottled coffee and bread spread with bacon-grease.

As he munched his bread his glance fell on the newspaper that had served as wrapper for his sandwiches. Phil had not learned to read without the aid of his forefinger. But with ample time and the assistance of this member he was able to decipher most of the print, which, in one way or another, drifted, at long intervals, into the Hawkins' household. The title of the sheet before him, printed in large black type across the top, was *Le Fevre's Marriage Bureau*.

It was dated some five years back. Perhaps Dead Ad had, on a warm day, felt recurring the cosmic urge, and, reading some advertisement, had sent for a copy.

Phil deciphered one of Le Fevre's bargains. The perusal roused in him a mild curiosity. His stubby forefinger puzzled on. While a lazy sun floated on to the west through a turquoise sky Phil sat in the salt grass reading one after another of the increasingly fascinating descriptions of Le Fevre's choice items. Ladies waiting, apparently, for him; waiting with arms outstretched, sometimes with money in their fingers, always with a tabulated list of the very talents so necessary and so lacking in the Hawkins household. Just waiting for him, Phil Hawkins, to come and carry them back to his old man and a happy future.

An idea had taken complete possession of Phil's unplumbed soul.

That night he wrote to *Le Fevre's Bureau* for an up-to-date copy of the journal.

It came, and Phil spent the following morning on the far edge of the corn-field devouring the descriptions of a fresh array of lovely females.

During the evening father and son sat in conclave. Dead Ad warmed up to the idea immediately. Their final selection ran as follows:

NUMBER 628.

I am not beautiful, but I'm honest. I am faithful, loving and I can work. I am of German parentage and when I set about a thing I see it through. I am twenty-six, of sound health and weigh 106 pounds. I have saved five hundred dollars and can bake, sew, cook and run a threading machine. I am an orphan and want a home with a kind, loving farmer. Send photograph and full description of the farm.

TILLY MAY.

The whole thing sounded good to Phil.

Was it a picture of the farm, or of Phil that was required?

Dead Ad worked over a rough draft of the reply to Tilly May's appeal. Phil copied this, sweating profusely. He wrapped an old family tintype, with his own likeness on it as a boy of twelve, in a two-page description of the house, the barn, the pigs, chickens, the hedge, stone wall, and roan mare, and mailed it all to *Le Fevre's Marriage Bureau* with a return stamp. Then he sat around to await developments.

Phil had never approached his present state of uncomfortable expectancy. The even tenor of Dead Ad's existence was, however, no whit altered. Sitting around awaiting developments had been the favorite occupation of the Hawkins family for four straight generations.

In due time came Tilly May's reply, enclosing a Brownie snap-shot of her charms. The photograph, being of the bust only, and somewhat over-exposed, revealed little that was definite of her features and build. That little, however, was enough to register the truth of her

assertion that she was not beautiful. Dead Ad, after close scrutiny, decided that her eyes were a bit crossed.

The letter was a masterpiece of neat, decisive, practical femininity. She wanted a husband. She also wanted a home. She was not over-particular about either. She wanted both quickly. If Mr. Hawkins was agreeable, let him come to East Merrick, Connecticut, the third house on the right on the road running south from the cotton mill, any day next week. There she could look Phil over and Phil could see what he wished to about her. Everything else being arranged they could get married by the town justice of the peace, above the post office, and start back home the following day.

Phil was a bit dizzy from the effect of this business-like epistle. Dead Ad was delighted. Here was a woman that'd do things, cross-eyes, or no cross-eyes. He could see that plain as day from her letter. Never mind looks. That girl was a hustler. Incidentally some of her five hundred would help them buy fertilizer next spring. They needed some—bad!

Two days later, Phil, provided with a considerable part of the family funds, left for East Merrick. One week later Dead Ad met Phil and his bride at the dock of the New London boat and drove them back to the farm.

When the old roan mare, pulling the ancestral box-wagon, came to a slow stop before the kitchen door Tilly May was the first to jump out. She preceded Phil over the threshold of the lean-to kitchen by several steps, while Dead Ad started the Hawkins rig moving on again toward the barn.

III

THAT moment ushered the revolution into the Hawkins menage.

Within ten days Tilly May had personally moved to the kitchen stoop and superintended the carting away of four wagon-loads of accumulated debris. She had swept, scrubbed and scoured

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the whole outfit, fixtures, furniture, occupants and utensils.

In ten weeks the row of Osage orange trees had been cut down to hedge formation and the front yard had been mowed with sickle and scythe. Pots, pans and window panes were shining. Chickens no longer roosted with impunity on the kitchen chairs. The tom-cat had learned the peril of drinking out of the milk pans, or stealing pancakes from the kitchen table. Dead Ad had had his whiskers cut, and Phil wore a new suit of overalls.

In ten months Tilly May had Dead Ad squeezed down under her stubby, potato-stained thumb and Phil wrapped securely around her sinewy little forefinger. In short, Tilly May reigned in the Hawkins household an undisputed, but benevolent despot. The Hawkins farm began to produce passably good crops and the Hawkins fortunes hit the long up-grade.

In the process Tilly May's weight had dropped from one hundred and six pounds to an even hundred-weight of steel springs and pepper. But never had she failed to be the first out of bed and the last in. Never had she suffered the slightest indisposition. She had worked incessantly—sewing, washing, baking, scouring, grubbing in the field. Nothing was difficult for her, nothing disagreeable.

IV

At the end of ten years of fortune good and bad the Hawkins bank account had grown to eighteen hundred dew-drenched dollars and the Hawkins farm from six acres of cleared land to twenty-six. Tilly May had become a leading spirit in the Norwold Methodist sewing-society and church sociables, and had earned a reputation as the indisputably best baker of kidney-beans in a five-mile radius. She was a whirlwind at a church supper, or a Sunday-school picnic.

Beyond these there were few noticeable changes. Phil had grown a bit stouter; had lost all but the stumps of one or two front teeth. His grin had

become, if possible, a trifle more fatuous.

Dead Ad remained static.

Tilly May's attitude toward her husband had developed in a somewhat curious way. During her first months on the Hawkins farm she found vent for all her energy in her almost enthusiastic wrestling with its general dilapidation. Later, when her life had settled into its drab monotony of house-and-field work she had had time and occasion to realize plainly enough her husband's limitations. Gradually his moral weakness and physical incompetency were borne in on her. Her energy she consumed in heavy manual labor. She rarely went to bed until her husband's snores had sounded taps.

From her first modest replies in defense of him against the plainly sarcastic remarks of her acquaintances in the village she had advanced, by slow degrees, in self-defense against the sharp tongues of her Methodist friends, to somewhat defiant praise of his qualities as a man and a husband. This habit of praising him had, by a kind of auto-intoxication, persuaded herself of the existence of these qualities.

Her neighbors, had they not possessed their own eyes, ears, noses and reasoning powers, might have believed Phil to be one of Norwold's chief decorations. But Tilly's neighbors were not easily fooled.

These neighbors, in fact, more than once coupled the name of Phil's lucky find with that of a young farmer whose house stood perhaps a half mile down the road toward the village.

If only Sam Gardner had dug up Tilly May for a help-mate and Sam Gardner's slattern wife had stumbled under the Hawkins yoke, fate would have seemed, to the village gossips, more seasoned with good, sound horse-sense.

Sam Gardner had embarked on the uncharted sea of matrimony about the same time that Phil had brought Tilly May home, a captive bride, to the Hawkins farm. During the same ten years that had seen the slow emergence of the

Hawkinses from the Slough of Despond to a footing on dry respectability, Sam Gardner and a rapidly increasing family had been slowly slipping back in the grease and dirt of a never-scrubbed kitchen. For awhile Tilly had never had occasion to become suspicious about her condition. Sam Gardner's wife, once she had started, had delivered into the Gardner household one little Gardner after another with an annual regularity that reminded one of the neap-tides and spring equinox. Put the sun at Perihelion and call the turn on the tropic of Cancer, and just so certainly would a new little Gardner emerge into the increasing untidiness of the Gardner premises.

Sam did his best to keep up with the procession. He worked as hard as any man on the whole point—or harder. But he also had hard luck—a hard luck that grew in harness with the size of his family. He had a wife, too, of whom her neighbors said with a shake of the head: "She simply can't do—ain't got it in her—poor thing!" So when Sam's wife was finally gathered up by a merciful Providence in the act of delivering to an already crowded world a sixth nine-pound baby, Sam found himself on the brow of the hill to the poorhouse and saddled with the staggering task of mothering and fathering, in indescribable filth, six squalling, little half-clothed Gardners of whom the oldest had only just entered school.

But Sam, with the same smile that made every man and woman who knew him his friend, persuaded an old aunt to keep house for him and went cheerily about his work as though his path were of moss and May-pinks instead of rocks and of brambles.

The whole village was good to Sam in his trouble and not a neighbor but called to bring him and his six little Sams food, or clothes, or some other sample of a practical, neighborly brand of assistance.

Not the least generous or helpful of these was Tilly May. Had all the kidney-beans which passed from the Hawkins oven to the Gardner kitchen table

in huge pans of sweet succulence surrounding large chunks of juicy, well-browned pork been poured into a single huge receptacle, it would have required the combined strength of the Hawkins roan mare and the Gardner grey gelding to have hauled it from Tilly May's back door to Sam's. On many a Sunday morning it was Tilly May, who in the huge washtub of suds in the middle of the kitchen floor, scrubbed the procession of grimy Gardners into a rosy state of Sunday-school shininess.

And many and many a time as Tilly May rubbed the suds over the bare, firm flesh of the Gardner babies did a warm thrill flood her scrawny, flat bosom and a deep mother-yearning sweep her soul and fill her with a longing that made her pinch and pat the rosy flesh, turn with reluctance from her finished task, and go back up the lane with a vague restlessness to her own sterile home and husband.

V

ABOUT midway between the Gardner and Hawkins homesteads lived Silas A. Jenkins, whose large red barns and white-shingled, rambling house, flanked on the left by its orchard of baldwins and russets, and on the right by its well-kept vegetable and flower-garden betokened him to be a farmer of more than usual prosperity. It was Silas A.'s grandfather who had bought the southern half of the original Hawkins farm.

The thriftiness which had characterized his ancestors had asserted itself in Silas A.'s make-up with a decisiveness that had caused him to be considered throughout the village as "about the meanest old skin-flint that the good Lord had ever let run around." This, however, had not prevented him from assuming a certain prominence in the town councils.

Only the good die young. Silas A. had reached the age of sixty odd years with but small indication in his wiry old frame of anything approaching decrepitude. In fact, the dominoe players in the back of Corey's drug-store recounted

frequently enough, with, of course, considerable fantastic exaggeration, stories of Silas A.'s more or less shady affairs with one or another of the community's more easy-going females.

He was a cadaverous individual whose hooked nose, in the total absence of intervening teeth, had come well-nigh to touching the point of a sharply protruding chin. Whiskers had never concealed the deeply furrowed, hard lines of his hatchet face. His bony hands were constantly shifting in and out of his coat pockets as if in search of small change which he had put somewhere and overlooked. His voice rose into a kind of dry cackle with the access of any emotion, pleasant, or otherwise. He had an odd habit of sneezing at will into his open palm and snapping his fingers before using his blue bandanna.

Continued prosperity (as the result of incessant work, utter selfishness and the starvation of every better element in his make-up), combined with considerable practice, fair judgment and total insensibility to rebuff, had conduced to a degree of success in his carefully concealed ventures which was totally unwarranted by any of the physical, mental, or spiritual qualities that usually appeal to the softer side of femininity.

As Tilly May hurried past Farmer Jenkins' white picket fence on her way home after one Sunday's scrubbing of the six young Gardners, Silas A. stopped her with a "Good morning, Tilly May," and engaged her in a presumably flirtatious conversation.

Tilly May, with some impatience, cut short the incipiently amorous banter.

"My husband's waitin' for me, Silas A. I ain't got no time for silly nonsense. You'd better go 'long in before your wife hears you."

With a toss of her head, she scurried on home to her Sunday ablutions, while Silas A., leaning on the white picket gate, followed her with his close-set eyes and cynical leer.

Tilly May, with her temper for some reason thoroughly soured, quarreled with Dead Ad on the score of his dirtiness, soundly berated Phil because he

had not already hitched up the roan mare, was late for church, burnt the Sunday pot-roast trying to hurry things up on her return, and wound up a thoroughly unsatisfactory Sunday by refusing to let Pop Hawkins play his four hymns on the well-varnished fiddle.

At six-thirty on the following morning Tilly May was out under the apple tree elbow deep in hot suds, battling with the week's accumulation of dirty socks and undershirts.

Violent exercise always served to restore her to good spirits. As the suds bubbled over the edge of the tub and the grey-brown water splashed about, Tilly May whistled "Nearer, My God, to Thee" with an airy lightness that clearly indicated her reconciliation with the God of things-as-they-are.

About nine-thirty, or just as she was wrestling with the last pair of Phil's blue overalls, Silas A. drove up to the apple tree in the well-known Jenkins' buckboard. Throwing down the reins with a studied nonchalance, he stepped spryly to the ground.

"Phil around—or the old man?"

"Cultivatin' corn."

"That's right, keep 'em drivin'!" cackled the old rogue. "Lord knows they've had years enough settin' around doin' nothin'."

Tilly May gave a little snort.

"I don't know's we're askin' you for any advice."

"No offense, no offense! I'm only thinkin' of the difference around this here place since you been handlin' the ribbons, Tilly May."

Mr. Jenkins picked up a wormy apple and examined it critically, turning it slowly about in his freckled hands. Tilly May looked up from the washboard.

"Is there anything special you want, Silas A.? I told you my husband was down in the corn lot. What's more—jest because you're Mr. Silas A. Jenkins you needn't think you can come around here insultin' my men folks, either."

"There, there! Highty-tighty; fair and flighty!" he chuckled. "I ain't said nothin' about your men folks, have I?

Dead Ad's Dead Ad and—well—Phil's—your husband! Jest the same I should think you'd be gettin' sick o' slavin' around here year in an' year out for two lazy Ikes that don't half appreciate you. Where you ever goin' to get with all your hustle and hard work? They'll eat it up faster'n you can make it!"

Her thin nostrils were a trifle expanded. Tilly May rested her wet hands on her narrow hips and looked her neighbor in the eyes.

"Mister Jenkins, I'd advise you to go and git what you want to git—or git—out! You're interruptin' my work."

"Great George Washin'ton, what a spitfire!"

Tilly May resumed her work with a snort of defiance. All her ill-humor, her self-deluding pride in her shiftless husband, her instinct of self-defense was roused. Farmer Jenkins' cackle stirred up in her a furious resentment.

"Well—I like it," he chuckled. "I allus liked a woman with a little git up and git to her. Jeerusalem knows you got enough! See here, Tilly May." He dropped the wormy apple and pushed his old felt hat to the back of his grey head. "You said I'm a—you called me a name I don't deserve, Lord knows." He pulled a small roll of old bills from his pocket and stripped off an elastic band.

"Now, here's jest a ten-dollar-bill to prove it."

He laid the bill on the edge of the bench by the side of the tub and leered at Tilly with an irresistibly enticing smile exposing a single decayed eye-tooth.

"Say, have you gone clean crazy, Silas A. Jenkins? What do you want with that ten dollars?"

Mr. Jenkins cackled. His bony hands went in and out of his coat pockets.

"Well, Tilly May, all I want with that ten dollars—an' some more, too, when you need it—is to show you I ain't no miser—as you say, an'—an'—jest to show you—" He picked up the wormy apple again—"There's easier work—an' better paid—than washin' dirty overalls."

Tilly May stood for a moment looking at the old reprobate and letting his meaning sink in.

"So—you're tryin' out your old game on me, huh?" There was a rising inflection in her shrill voice.

"Well, what's life, anyway, with all work an' no—"

Phil's wet overalls, wrapping themselves about his head prevented any further philosophizing. Tilly May, having hurled them, stood struggling to find expression for her fury.

"You — you — darn—old—crippled—skunk! You better get out o' here 'fore I fetch my husband—or the Lord help you!"

She turned and ran toward the field where Dead Ad and Phil were at work, the former guiding the cultivator, the latter the old roan mare slowly up and down the crooked rows of corn. Farmer Jenkins, realizing the full extent of his blunder as Tilly May disappeared behind the barn, picked up his ten-dollar bill, and stepped into his buckboard a little more spryly than usual.

Tilly May halted Phil half way down the row.

"Come here!" Her voice choked. When Phil, as usual, hesitated, her thin arm beckoned imperiously. "Come on!"

"Where?" Phil's mouth opened in surprise. Dead Ad, spitting belatedly, and, therefore, imperfectly, wiped his whiskers and likewise opened his mouth.

"Never mind where—jest you come with me!"

Phil looked at his dad who nodded. Tilly May wasn't to be crossed when she was in this frame of mind. She started back toward the house.

"Hurry up!"

"Well, for the love o' Gee Whitaker!" Phil fell in behind her.

"Do you want me, too?" called Dead Ad behind them.

Tilly May turned her head without slackening her stride.

"You mind your own business!"

Phil's dull pulse quickened two beats to the minute. As he rounded the barn he saw Tilly May darting back and

forth by the washtubs like a distracted hen in search of a hidden cricket.

"What's up?—Well—What's the matter?"

"He took it back! The skinflint!"

"Took what?—who?"

Tilly May turned on Phil, her crossed-eyes blazing.

"Silas A. Jenkins stood right there where you're standin', Phil Hawkins, not ten minutes ago and—in—sulted me! Do you hear—insulted me!" Tilly May screamed at Phil's vacuous grin.

"Do you hear?" She grabbed Phil's arm and shook him.

"Wait a minute! What are you so all-fired het up about? You're so darn touchy—!"

Tilly May sank on the washtub bench and sobbed in rage and humiliation.

"Aw—bawl like a jack-ass! What're ye cryin' about?"

Tilly May jumped up. In a torrent of unminced words she explained precisely the implication back of Silas A.'s remarks. Phil's lower jaw dropped in the characteristic Hawkins fashion. He scratched his ear as his wife stormed on. What should a fellow do in a fix like this? He wished Dead Ad were there for counsel.

Tilly May wound up with an angry, "Well, what'ye goin' to do?—I'll tell you what you're goin' to do! You're goin' with me this minute to that old devil's house and if you don't lick him, I will! I despise you worse'n I do him! You're a coward! Are you goin' to let Tom, Dick'n Harry come into your own yard and insult your own wife? Well—you ain't!"

She grabbed his arm and swung him violently around to face the front gate. She started off.

"Are you comin'?—You'd better come!"

Phil got slowly under weigh. He had to. He felt himself dragged irresistibly by his peppery wife's dominant will. But he hated to go. He hated trouble of any kind whatsoever. He dreaded the approaching encounter. His dull mind resembled a frog-pool stirred by the angry hoofs of a black heifer tor-

mented by flies. In the meantime he was moving down the road toward Jenkins' barn, half pulled along by Tilly May, who continued to pour out her flood of outraged pride and threats of violence.

Silas A.'s insult, in fact, angered her less, perhaps, than Phil's degraded lack of concern over his wife's abasement and his evident unwillingness to avenge it. This was a deeper humiliation than insult—one that laid bare all the sore spots of ten hard, unlovely years.

They found Farmer Jenkins pitching manure from the horse-stable into the cow-yard. He was working with studied unconcern as though he had not been watching the enraged Tilly May, trailed by her husband, come sailing down the road toward the house.

"I brought my husband, Silas A. Jenkins, for him to learn just what it was you proposed to me a little while ago. You're goin' to tell him jest exactly what it was you wanted o' me."

Silas A. looked anxiously toward the house to assure himself that his better half had as yet smelled nothing in the wind. He spoke in a low, wheedling tone.

"For good Lord's sake, Tilly May, can't you take a joke?"

"A joke, you call it!" She grabbed an old horse-whip lying on the floor of the barn. "Phil Hawkins, if you don't lick that old devil I never want to speak to you again!"

She forced the whip into Phil's nerveless hand.

Silas A. again glanced uneasily toward the house.

He appealed to Phil, who stood in utter confusion with hanging jaw.

"Not so loud, Tilly May! Phil, can't you make her use a little sense? I don't want my wife to hear this goin's-on."

"What did you tell me? What did you tell me!" screamed Tilly May, having wrought herself into a state of fury.

"I didn't tell you nothin'—honest!"

"You lie! You did!" She pushed her unwilling palladin violently into the stall toward her thoroughly frightened neigh-

bor. "If you've got the spunk of a rat give him the hidin' he deserves!"

Silas A. saw his wife at the door of the kitchen. He backed off to the rear of the stall out of the doorway and his wife's range of vision. He was trembling from head to foot. Phil likewise felt a wave of fear sweep over him that paralyzed his muscles and made it impossible for him to advance, or lift his arm. He felt the monstrous absurdity of the fact that he, Phil Hawkins, should be brandishing a horsewhip at Silas A. Jenkins, who had horsewhipped him as a boy for stealing cherries, who had served for years as a town assessor and justice of the peace, and who stood there now before him nervously fingering his pitchfork. It was a lunatic thing to do. He dreaded the consequences. He felt a rising indignation at his screaming fury of a wife who dragged him into this awkward mess because of a silly notion and a violent temper.

And so Phil and Silas A. mutually wrapped in fear and misgiving faced each other across the narrow horse-stable, equally uncertain of the next move, equally in dread of what his wife would think of him—or do.

"You—two—cowards!"

Phil at length decided that the lesser of two evils was to brave his wife's wrath.

"Aw—shut up! What more can he say than he didn't mean nothin'?"

"An' you stand there and do nothin' when you know—when tha—that—that thing! You—you—Phil Hawkins, I'm ashamed o' you!" Her voice choked. "Oh, God! if I was only married to a man!"

"Phil, I'll swear she's all het up over nothin', I swear it, honest! Why, what do you think I'd insult your wife for? I was jokin'—an'—up she flew in a rage an—" He shook his head despondently. "Women are beyond me! An' that's a fact!"

Tilly May suddenly darted out of the stable.

"Where you goin' now?"

Phil spoke in an aggrieved, disgusted

tone. She paused to deliver her ultimatum.

"Never you mind where I'm goin'! Since you don't care what happens to your wife—I'll see what I can do to that donkey! There's a law about sech things!" She turned and set sail down the road to Lawyer Wells' office over the tinshop.

VI

TILLY MAY'S feelings as she hurried along were in a dangerous state of tumult. All the sensitiveness of her energetic little body was hurt to the quick. All the loyalty which ten years of defiance of the town's opinion of her husband had developed in her lay shattered to bits. The veil of wilful self-delusion regarding this husband which she had held with unrelaxing vigilance before her own eyes had been savagely stripped away to reveal him as he really was—a poor hulk of a man utterly devoid of pride and masculinity. Tears dropped from her eyes. Tears of humiliation, tears of rage, tears of rebellion at the fate which had yoked her to this drop-jawed hybrid, tears that revolted against all the hard and hostile, cold and cowardly elements of her whole environment. Unable to analyze these elements, she epitomized them in the cringing figure of Silas Jenkins and the equally cowardly, hesitating form of her husband facing each other across the manure of the horse stable.

If she were only a man! How she would have loved to cowhide both!

As she was passing Sam Gardner's potato-field he swung into the road ahead of her in his box wagon behind the old grey gelding. Sam saw Tilly May coming along and waited for her.

"Where you bound in such a hurry?"

"Oh—down street," she replied vaguely, not slackening her pace.

"Hop aboard. So'm I."

"No—No. Don't bother—Go 'long!" Her impatient voice betrayed her quite unusual frame of mind.

"No bother. Get in. What's the matter? Somebody step on your corn?"

Tilly May, smarting under her load of indignities, and dying to talk to someone about it, put one foot on the shaft and sprang up to the seat beside him.

As Sam's grey gelding hitched slowly along the road, Tilly May poured into her neighbor's ears the unvarnished account of her morning's humiliation. She spoke in a dry, hard voice with the world-old appeal in it of the oppressed female. When she pictured to Sam the two figures of Phil and Silas A. opposing each other in the horse stable Sam laughed aloud—a hearty, ringing laugh that did more than he knew to restore Tilly May's equilibrium.

"Now, look here, Tilly," he drawled in his easy-going, good-natured way, "What's the use o' gettin' all fussed up and makin' yourself a lot o' trouble?"

"How can you say that, Sam Gardner—!"

"Old Man Jenkins is a nasty old rascal and everybody knows it. But you don't want to get mixed up in a mess like this, Tilly. Why, you'd be the talk o' the town. Every gossip and bum for ten miles around would be at that trial an'—aw—what's the use? You can't send him to jail! What do you want with a—lawsuit?"

Tilly May stared fixedly at the gelding's tail.

"I thought you had a little more spunk in you, Sam Gardner! What do I want! What'd you want if you'd listened to that kind o' talk?"

Sam glanced over at her with a droll little grin pulling down the corners of his mouth.

"Well—I might a looked on it as a compliment."

Tilly May snorted her disgust.

"Is that so! The old polecat! Of all men on earth!"

"Now, as for Phil," continued Sam with unperturbed good humor, "there's no use o' gettin' up on your high horse about Phil. He's got his failin's—like all the rest of us."

"He—he ain't no man, I'm sick of him! Little you know!"

Two tears rolled down her thin

cheeks, already tucked about her mouth by sharp converging lines.

"Come, come, Tilly—Phil's—Phil! You ain't jest found it out this mornin'."

"I hate him! I'll fix him! I'll fix 'em both!"

Sam was in a quandary. Lawyer Wells was a good deal of a wag. Sam didn't like lawsuits. He didn't like scandal. On the other hand he did thoroughly like Tilly May.

Tilly May had lapsed into a gloomy silence.

He could think of no plan. He wished his old aunt were home. He would have taken Tilly May in to talk with her and cool off. But she had gone that morning to the village with the children. Only the baby would be home tied in the little pen Sam had built for him in the orchard. He looked in as they passed the gate and saw the little fellow playing in his box of sand. An idea struck him.

"See that little tike o' mine in there! They're all gone an' left him. Wait till I see if he's all right. Won't be a minute."

Little Billy was Tilly May's favorite of the Gardner brood.

"The poor thing!"

They turned in at the gate and Sam, leaving Tilly May sitting in the wagon, went back of the house to the orchard.

Tilly May had a few minutes' time in which to think things over.

Sam reappeared at the kitchen door with Billy, dirty-faced, chubby and laughing on his arm.

"Tell you what you do, Tilly—jest to please me. I got up at four this mornin' to poison potatoes. I want a cup o' coffee 'fore we go on down street. It'll give us a little time to talk things over."

Tilly hesitated.

"I want to help you do the best thing, yes I do."

There was an element of good-natured pleading in his voice and smile.

"No, much obliged, I'll go on down. When I start a thing, I finish it! I don't care if the hull town does know it. Now,

don't coax me, please." Her tones were by no means as decided as before.

"Come, Tilly, I'm not goin' to coax you to do nothin'. You just set here a minute with Billy while I have my coffee and make sure you're goin' at this the best way—That's all. Come on!"

"Are you goin' to coax me to drop this?"

"No, I ain't! I don't blame you a darn bit, I don't—only— Come on in till I swallow a cup o' coffee. This'll keep!"

Tilly May started slowly to descend. "If it was your wife that was in a mess you mightn't be so unconcerned." She jumped to the ground.

"I'm not unconcerned. I jest want to give you good advice. Yes I do. Maybe Lawyer Wells, smellin' a fee ahead o' him, won't be so particular!"

He preceded Tilly May into his kitchen, where the coffee-pot stood steaming on the back of the stove. He deposited Billy in a corner. While he poured out a cup and cut some bread, Tilly picked up the child and played with him absent-mindedly in her lap.

"Have a cup, won't you, Tilly? You've had as busy a mornin', about as I have."

"Well, I don't mind if I do. Maybe it will quiet my nerves a trifle. I'm fairly used up, I am—and reason enough!"

Her thin lips trembled a little.

"It's a darn shame, Tilly—that's a fact."

With one hand she stroked Billy's tangled curls. With the other she wiped a tear from her eye with the corner of her apron as Sam explained to her the usual unsatisfactory course of lawsuits.

As she sipped her coffee opposite this big, good-natured, quiet-voiced farmer with his baby pulling at the edge of her apron, still a trifle damp from the Hawkins washtub, the whole morning's episode presented itself in a less and less lurid light.

Sam urged her to forget it and return home. In the future she should simply ignore Silas A.'s existence. It would

avoid trouble and notoriety and, in fact, was the only sensible thing to do.

But Tilly May was still thinking less of Silas A.'s insult than she was of Phil's cowardly lack of concern. All the anger which had blazed out against her neighbor and later against the two men in the horse-stable now centered on the shambling form of Dead Ad's son. In the process her husband's figure shriveled and twisted into the personification of all things mean, contemptible, disgusting.

"Go back home to that—jellyfish! I don't care if I never go back!"

Little Billy saw the family cat sneak from the kitchen into the sitting-room to find a soft bed somewhere in the inner part of the house. Billy scrambled from Tilly's lap and toddled off in pursuit.

"Well, Gawd knows he is kind of a mess, I'll admit— But that ain't nothin' new to you, Tilly May."

"I've slaved for him and his dirty old man for ten years and he—he don't care that much what becomes o' me!" She snapped her fingers with a vicious twist of her arm.

Sam rose to see what mischief Billy was getting into. He saw him crawling under the sofa after the cat and went in to extricate him before the inevitable howl would interrupt them.

"Wait a minute till I get that brat!"

Tilly May looked at him as he knelt clumsily before the sofa and reached under it for Billy. She felt a curious prickling in her forehead and rubbed it with the back of her hand. Billy, thinking his dad was playing a new game, gurgled and kicked lustily. Sam pulled him out by one leg.

"Good Lord, Sam Gardner, let me get him! You'll pull his leg off!"

Billy began to yell.

"No danger," laughed Sam. "The darn little monkey."

Tilly May took him from Sam's arm and sat with him in her lap rocking and quieting him. The prickling sensation returned.

"Billy baby! stop a cryin'." She held him up and shook him and buried her

face in the muddy front of his blue rompers. Billy recovered his good spirits immediately. He laughed and kicked at Tilly's thin stomach.

"Oh, Lord, if I only had a kid like him! There'd be some use in life!"

"Well, why don't you!" Sam grinned at her. Tilly May rose and stood Billy on his chubby, uncertain legs. He wobbled out of the room still in pursuit of the cat. Tilly May looked after him. A curious expression lay about her narrow face and slightly crossed eyes.

"Little you know!" She stood before Sam uncertain, uneasy. Sam's big grey eyes grew just a trifle bigger. His smile broadened. He looked at the wiry little frame before him. Tilly May drew a long breath.

"Well, what're ye laughin' at? I don't see anything funny about it."

She glanced at Sam, then out of the window that faced the road. Sam was standing near the door to the kitchen.

"You ready to go?" There was a new note in her voice. She started past him. Sam stretched his arm across the doorway.

Something stirred in the depths of Tilly May—an impulse compounded of her morning's humiliation, her anger, her scorn and resentment at her husband's cowardice, indifference; an impulse born of ten years of childless, dull slavery, of passions deadened by unrelenting toil, of buried emotions and starved love.

"Well?"

VII

A HALF hour later a wagon rattled slowly past the house toward the village.

It was long past the usual dinner hour when this same wagon rattled slowly back and into the Gardner farmyard. Phil had spent two hours hunting for Tilly May about the village. Having given up the search, he had turned back and had picked up Sam's aunt and five children on the road home.

As Phil's passengers scrambled out of the rickety old cart Sam came out of the kitchen door. The odor of frying

bacon came after him. Sam's children crowded about him to show him their purchases. With blank astonishment Phil saw Tilly May behind Sam carrying Billy in her arms and apparently in excellent spirits.

"Goddermighty! I been a huntin' you for two solid hours down street."

"Is that—so! Well, you needn't to!" The words snapped, sarcastically.

She came out and climbed to the seat beside him.

"Good-bye, Sam—look out that bacon don't burn."

Phil clucked at the old roan. He was puzzled. As they turned out of Sam's yard into the road home he spoke to the off ear of the roan.

"Thank the Lord, anyway, ye got sense enough to drop this revenge business an' fergit it!"

"Huh!" There was utter disdain in her voice. "I ain't forgot it, Phil Hawkins—I never will!"

She slapped the flank of the old roan with the buckle at the end of the reins.

"Hurry up, I'm hungry!"



John Strom, Thrice Doctor

By James Drayham

JOHN STROM, thrice doctor, wrote 10,000 pages or so, to prove the value of an intellectual life. Not content with writing, he also lectured. One day he grew more enthusiastic than usual. He almost shouted: "The body begins to rot at thirty. The intellect is a perennial flower!"

A piece of plaster fell with a thunderclap upon the bald pate of John Strom, thrice doctor.

John Strom was thirty-nine years old that day. He continued to live for thirty-two years more. Of the ten languages he knew fluently the only word he remembered was "Boo!" which he liked to repeat, as he used to repeat his lectures. Of the ten thousand pages or so that he had written he made cornucopias, which he balanced on his head, exclaiming: "Boo! Boo! Boo!"



Love

By Alice Corbin

*If love were only sorrow,
No one would care to try—
But if love were only happy,
It would be too cheap to buy!*

*So love is mixed with sadness,
However gay it be,
So love is never wholly bound,
And never wholly free!*



Scarehead

By Nunnally Johnson

I

CAREY reflected that there was danger that the situation would become ridiculous if he argued any longer with the scalper. One ticket, even for a Nestleton first night, was not, he knew, worth twenty-five dollars; certainly not a man's last twenty-five dollars. But, on the other hand, so long as he was set on shooting himself at a Nestleton first night, he would have to pay the price. Such a privilege was not to be had for nothing.

It rancored, though, even after he got back to his room to dress. It was plain, outright robbery, and something should have been done about it long since. It was not, he told himself, as if he were going to remain for the whole show, or even enjoy that part of it he did stay for. He was going to shoot himself, he figured, along about the middle of the second act. For the remainder of the evening, the seat would be empty.

He considered, benevolently, notifying the manager, so that it could be sold again, immediately. The other fellow could be told not to present himself at the door until he heard a pistol shot. Thus, outside of the few seconds needed to lift his body out into the aisle and then the lobby, none of the valuable Nestleton first night time would be lost.

He dismissed the idea when the scalper's price occurred to him again. Twenty-five dollars for one seat! It would serve Nestleton right if he shot him, too. And perhaps one or two of the supporting cast. It was always

difficult for Nestleton to find players willing to stand for his outrageous temperament.

Better still, he ruminated, tightening his tie, he might shoot the dramatic critic of one of the Hearst papers; that, he believed, would serve his ends better than anything else. "*Demented Lover Slays Famed Critic.*" The erroneous impression that he was fond of the Hearst man could be corrected in a drop-headline, still in large, and maybe red, type: "*Anthony Carey, Jilted by Harlem Girl, Runs Amuck at Nestleton First Night. Thousands See Double Tragedy.*"

He made sure, as he put on his coat, that the means he had selected for quick and easy identification were properly distributed. They consisted of seven calling cards, one for each pocket, and his address penned on each. On the back of one he wrote, "*Tell Myrtle,*" and her telephone number. "*Unrequited Love Seen as Motive.*" It should be impossible, he felt, not to be identified immediately, in time for the regular morning city editions.

As he sat down and lighted a last cigarette to be smoked in this room, a chilling thought came to him. Suppose the papers put the whole affair down as a press-agent stunt. Suppose, even with his body laid out in death, they chose not to take it seriously. He had heard that city editors were very suspicious of news connected with theatres. He decided he'd better shoot two critics. He didn't believe that the papers would permit even a big advertiser like the Shuberts to get away with anything like that. The deaths of two

critics surely they would take as worthy of a front-page story.

But, to be on the safe side, he reconstructed his plan. He would shoot five critics. The last bullet would be enough for himself. With some unconscious satisfaction he began selecting his victims. . . . After all, he reflected, twenty-five dollars was not too much for such an evening as this promised to be.

It occurred to him then that the pleasanter aspect of the situation must not drive its serious side out of his mind. The five critics were, after all, no more than sacrifices to effect a more important end. Miss Myrtle Martin, the Harlem girl, must be brought to realize, at any or all costs, how tremendous a thing was this love she had rejected.

"They must die," he referred to the critics, "that my memory and the memory of my love may live."

Provided the editors did not assume the motive for the slaughter to be aesthetic exasperation, which was not likely, they would be sure to call for a woman motive. Preferably, he realized, it would be a girl with a photograph taken in a one-piece bathing suit. Myrtle, he recalled regretfully, had no such picture, so far as he knew. He did have one, though, taken when she had her legs crossed. He got it out of his trunk and laid it on the table, where it would be seen by the first reporter to break in through the window.

The stage, he felt, was properly set. He would die under the most spectacular circumstances. The shot that would scatter his brains over a radius of four or five feet would at the same time frighten the liver out of the most famous of American dramatic stars. Dozens of other stars in the audience, and dozens of writers and artists and half-world ladies would be startled by that shot, many of them into soberness. What critics survived after his fusillade of shots would rush madly to the nearest telephone booths that were in blind-tigers, and the swiftest and most accu-

rate of all reporters would be dashing for the Nestleton Theatre to concentrate their talents on him—Anthony Carey.

It was an elaborate arrangement, but nothing less, he felt, would achieve the effect he wanted. Miss Martin might conceivably be impervious to a slighter holocaust. By reason of her dogged unwillingness to jeopardize the smooth, if deliberate, functioning of her brain on heavier reading, matters of less moment than the Stillman case, the Arbuckle case, or the Hall-Mills case were always slipping by without her noticing it. Minor adulteries she was able to grasp, but the common grades of news eluded her completely.

He had thought of shooting a Hearst critic first because it was a Hearst paper Miss Martin always bought on the way to the 125th Street subway station. With that narrow but exquisitely accurate sense of human frailty, it would, without the faintest doubt, include "Love" or "Lover" in the headline. Carey relied on her quickness to note this fact even before the train reached 42d Street. By the time it reached 14th Street, he calculated, she would have found his name in the lower, smaller type headline. Surely, he felt, with such an intimate and obvious connection, she could not fail to read the whole story.

It was, after a fashion, regrettable that five famous critics had to die that Miss Martin might be persuaded to read a whole newspaper story, he thought as he slipped on his overcoat to leave, but what else could be done? There would be, after all, nothing personal about it. He disliked only three of the critics he had selected; the other two he chose because they were fat, and hence easy targets. One bullet must do for each; he would have no time to reload.

II

BEFORE pushing his way through the crowded lobby and into the theatre, he bought a late afternoon paper. He had

a curiosity to visualize from it how the morning paper would look.

He noted the eight-column streamer: "*Black Hand Seen in Poison Pen Cases.*"

Below was a smaller headline to the effect that the Police Commissioner was convinced that the sometime dormant society of Mafia was entirely responsible for certain threatening letters recently received by the Morgan bank, Standard Oil Company officials, and Judge Elbert H. Gary. Included in this news were pictures of Judge Gary, the two John D. Rockefellers, and the late J. Pierpont Morgan, and a smaller reproduction of the farmhouse on Long Island where Carpentier trained, labeled here, "*Cottage in which Judge Gary was Born.*"

Carey smiled scornfully. Desperation news, he termed it. Newspapers wanted liver stuff than that. They should have it. He tossed the paper into a palm tub, felt for the gun on his hip, and then followed the usher to his seat, far on the left side of the orchestra, about midway back.

He rather enjoyed the first act. Nestleton was at his magnificent best. The audience was enthralled. When the lights came on after the act, Carey spotted his five victims. Four were on the aisle nearest him. The fifth, the fattest, was on the other side of the house. He decided, though, that he could hit him, but that he'd better shoot him first, before his aim could be affected by trembling. He might be nervous.

Strangely enough, he did not feel at all excited when the lights died down for the second act. He did not even think of Miss Martin, except to hope that the news carried to her would picture him as less awkward than he was beginning to suspect it would be.

He felt that it should be tragic, he standing there, tall and handsome, in the aisle, fire spurting from the gun in his hand, man of letters after man of letters biting the carpet under his unerring aim, finally ending the bloody

scene with the last bullet sent crashing through his own brain. He noted Miss Helen McCall, the beloved movie queen, sitting in an aisle seat a few rows down. He decided that the resultant publicity would be increased materially if he fell dead across her lap.

Nothing should be left undone which might draw the Harlem girl's attention to the news.

He was ready for it now. He felt in his pockets; the cards were all there. Quietly, then, so as not to disturb anybody, he rose and climbed over the knees between his seat and the aisle. He was shushed once or twice; nothing else. He stood there for a second, beginning, to his dismay, to feel numb. He discovered suddenly that his knees were weak, barely able to hold him up. People began to notice him, chiefly with hissed orders to sit down. Their voices drew the attention of others. Carey felt sick, utterly frightened.

He felt himself sway, and groped for support with one hand while he pulled at his gun, trying to extricate it from the pocket, with his other. The waving hand came to rest on a bald head. He snatched it away as though he had touched fire. He had recognized it, by its curious conformation; it was a Hearst critic's head. He shuddered.

More people were noticing him. Hoarse commands grew louder. He swayed like a drunken man; his nerves and brain had ceased to function. They seemed to be dead. He kept fumbling for the gun.

The shushes and the commands grew louder and louder. Everybody was watching him. Even on the stage he was being noticed. There was a buzz-buzz of talk. He felt, distantly, that an usher would be running down the aisle in a second or two. Then it would be too late. He would be under arrest, charged with forcing an entrance, disorderly conduct, violating the Sullivan Act, drunkenness, resisting an officer, attracting a crowd, false pretenses, and what not.

Then the gun came out of his pocket.

It served to snap the last tie of control Carey had over his actions. Miss Martin dissolved into nothing. Four of the critics disappeared from his vision; the face of the fifth, the bald-headed Hearst man, loomed before him in the haze of vagueness like a white platter. He staggered forward two steps and came to a halt, leaning heavily against Miss McCall's bare white shoulder. Slowly he brought the gun into view, and there was a scream that stopped the show, a shuffle of feet, a tense, far-away command of "Grab him!" It was all so far away, all so vague, vaguer even than a dream. He turned, slowly, hesitatingly, raised the gun and fired, somewhere, anywhere. The explosion rocked the house. Carey realized that many women probably had fainted.

But Miss McCall, who had recently completed her 40-episode serial, "Locomotive Mary Miller," was one of those who had not. Shots were, to her, only shots, and nothing more. She threw the weight of a sturdy body into a heave that sent Carey away from his support and hurtling across the aisle.

He staggered, stumbled, twirled, and then pitched head-first downward. His brain snapped, and he knew nothing. His eyes shut. The waving gun hand fell against a seat, was buckled under his chest as he sprawled against somebody, and then his nerveless trigger finger tightened.

The second report was muffled under his coat, between him and the man over whom he had fallen. His uncontrollable finger worked again and again. Four other reports followed. Then he collapsed; he had shot himself five times—the last through the heart.

And he died, without ever realizing it, in the Hearst man's lap.

III

MISS MARTIN got her favorite paper as usual that morning. And, as usual, she waited until the train started downtown before opening it. Slowly, also as usual, she regimented her mental faculties to assimilate the heavy black headline across the front page. Long before the train reached 42d Street she had mastered it.

"Attempt Made to Assassinate Steel Magnate in Theatre."

There was a second headline:

"Master Mind of Black Hand Follows Poison Pen Letter with Murder Attempt. Dies in Hand to Hand Struggle with Famed Critic."

And finally Miss Martin reached the news story:

An unsuccessful attempt was made to assassinate J. Frank McGuinness, an employe of the United States Steel Corporation, by "Dynamite Tony" Carreo, notorious Black Hand, at the opening of August Nestleton's season last night. After firing one shot at Mr. McGuinness, who was in the rear of the second balcony, "Dynamite Tony" attacked Raphael Mansfield, veteran dramatic critic, who quickly turned the Italian's own gun around and killed him.

The story was ornamented with a picture of a man with fierce moustachios and earrings. This, said the caption, was "Dynamite Tony" Carreo, knifer and bomber, who, according to an unnamed authority, had a long criminal record, both in this country and abroad.

Miss Martin gave up the struggle for information at the end of the first paragraph. She turned the pages until she found the story of a man who had brought six wives to live in the same house with him. . . . The train rushed on toward Wall Street.



Warning to Americans

By Jay Jarrod

I

THE hoopdeedoodle gabble about the salacity, shamelessness and sin of Paris must needs produce from even the most ingenuous of Cook's tourists a report singularly suggesting a chuckle. For the fact of the matter is that the city on the Seine — that one-time village of viciousness and vice—is today fully as moral as the purest and most purged of Middle-Western utopias. Venus no longer beckons Henry P. Winterbottom, Khedive of Kansas, from her marble-topped tabouret in the café on the boulevard, while Bacchus has discarded his headdress of grapes and cast the vine leaves from his grizzled locks. In turn, Order and Propriety stalk the stainless streets; Respectability is the cognomen of the chauffeur who manœuvres the taxi. The tales told of levantine afternoons and oriental nights in the bordellos of Montmartre are now as devoid of veracity as the poplimbo that is ladled out to the effect that genuine gaiety still exists in the Latin Quarter. The truth is quite another story. In fine, the high doings, the cuttings up, the razzle-dazzle of antebellum days are now as rare in that decayed metropolis as a pretty woman.

One may tramp two-thirds of the town in quest of shocking post-cards and return footsore and exhausted with nothing more wicked than the picture souvenirs of Palisades Park. One may witness every revue from "Oh! Quel Nu!!!" at the Concert Mayol to the Olympia vaudeville

without experiencing half the kick to be squeezed out of a matinée at the Columbia Burlesque. What high stepping obtains in those nocturnal palaces of Terpsichore is nine-tenths the effort of Spaniards or Americans: a Frenchman in a Parisian supper café is as scarce as a sober Federal agent; a toothsome flapper is unknown. The chop-licking vice-dispeller, upon engaging the current Parisian motion-picture screen, is presented, not with flashes of nudity and amour, but, to his deadly disappointment, with Douglas Fairbanks' feature film of three years past. When this same fellow subsequently sneaks down a crooked alley and stealthily enters The Wickedest Haunt in All Paris, it is not Voluptuous Veronica that bites him on the ear and hurls her crock of cognac into a corner, but Mrs. Ira W. Botts, of Waco, Tex., and her smug husband who smile feebly in his direction and emit hollow coughs.

Among those, whose knowledge of the French tongue is wholly nil, plentiful palaver is still manufactured upon the immorality of Paris, but that immorality actually exists almost entirely in their own cankerous imaginations. The few *filles de joie* who may still disport themselves are invariably sufficiently unattractive to put off a one-eyed lumber-jack in his cups, or, for that matter, a crusader himself. Vice, if not entirely vanished, has been stripped of its former glamour, and now fails to fascinate the veriest Methodist. From the Porte Maillot to Père La Chaise, from the Place Pigalle to the Porte

Saint Martin a tidal moral wave of colossal proportions has swept the city, carrying all before it; the ribaldry of yesterday remains but a fact of yesterday. No longer do the mopsies of the Moulin Rouge kick up their scarlet heels to the cackle of the can-can; no more the wriggling girls of the Folies-Bergeres and Ba-Ta-Clan. The strain of seductive violins has ceased to awaken the mirrored walls of café and cabaret; in its stead echoes the jingle of honest Lenox Avenue jazz—the din of Darktown drummers. And thus one envisages the following: "Chez Mariette. Stands alone as a real American Clubby Cabaret Club. Good entertainment as of San Francisco in days of old. Frank Dejean of the — Hotel, New York City." And so at such palaces of popdoodling—Circo's Peroquet, the Café de Paris, the Folies, the Club Daunou, the Clover Club and the like—one is served with ancient American tunes tintinnabulated by third-rate Ethiopian orchestras.

II

ALLEZ-OOP! On with the dance! Trot out the tin pan piano and fling the fiddler a fistful of francs to prance to the very latest rag from the Follies of 1920. Hoop la! Hail the passing chariot and bid the jehu be off to the direst den of depravity in the luridest of districts!

Upon arrival are you confronted with scenes of shame that would curl the toupée of a traveling salesman or turn crimson the cheek of a Hollywood coryphée? No! A thousand times no! On the contrary, you are escorted into a chamber of gentle aspect, decorated with several more or less curious Yankees bent upon a mission similar to your own. And do their visages beam with thrill and satisfaction? No! Decidedly no! They have begun to realize that the show is one of artificiality, of pretense, of charlatanism. The stage is

clumsily set and the actors are obviously mere actors. Clo-Clo, Ju-Ju, Margot are but memories of the gaudy past. In vain one scans the Rue Pigalle for symptoms of sin, only to encounter the dreariest decorum. One drops into Le Lapin Agile at the top of the Rue Saint Vincent only to harken to the virtuous verses of a superannuated songster who warbles for the sole benefit of his tourist clientele, to whom it has been whispered that one knows nothing of nocturnal Paris who has not visited Le Lapin!

Fruitlessly one explores the caravans of the Boulevard Clichy in the absurd hope of detecting some novel form of impudicity but to discover shim-sham not half as intriguing as the side-shows of Coney Island. Even the bill posters have become painfully pure.

The guide to the resorts of the underworld who, in 1913, would buttonhole the gay-dog-out-for-a-time and, in broken English, announce his thorough knowledge of the hell-holes of the city is today a rara avis. The fact is that the hell-holes have become resorts of eminent respectability. Likewise has the Bohemia of Paris undergone a monstrous metamorphosis. Studios no longer resound with the popping of corks and treble of light laughter, but sobriety and solemnity now wield the brush of serious endeavor: the Quartier has put aside its cap and bells of frivolity and forsworn the motley of merrier moments. The would-be sightseer of sin soon finds himself sorely disappointed for sin has bundled up its baggage and fled the town. Today its very tracks are barely visible; tomorrow they will have wholly disappeared.

Amble down the Rue de Rivoli, into the Rue Valois and thence to the gardens of the Palais Royale, keeping the optic well peeled for the slightest indication of impropriety. The picture-shops, novelty bazaars and emporiums beneath those colonnaded

promenades, that once bespoke of spicy sketch and vicious volume, are now as chaste as the general store on Main Street. Turn your steps into the Avenue de l'Opera and down the Boulevard des Capucines, exploring the various "passages" on the route. Lest he be shocked by copies of the Guide Taride, patent cigar-lighters, colored handkerchiefs, beaded bags, maps of the city, advertisements of tours to the battlefields of France, brochures of steamship companies, antique furniture, meringue glacé, fake jewelry, silk pajamas, patés de veau and American shoes the streets of Paris must wholly fail to scandalize the most Methodistic of meanderers. Sneak a peep into the well-known hotel bars as, say, the Crillon, Maurice, Continental, Grand Ritz, Claridge, Regina, and if you are able to detect the dimmest glimmer of gaiety in any of them I shall be only too enchanted to set you up to that libation you speak of as your favorite.

Enormous placards of the Ligue Nationale Contre, L'Alcoolism, ad-

vocating prohibition, emblazon the thoroughfares wherever one may wander and in the show windows of that estimable organization wax models of the gizzards of dipsomaniacs are exhibited to the public gaze. And not without effect. Since the abolition of absinthe the Parisian has become well-nigh a teetotaler. With the exception of a mild claret (a wine scarcely stronger than near-beer) the boulevardier rarely touches anything of an intoxicating character. A well-mixed cocktail is almost as unattainable in Paris as a cigarette that is fit to puff; a tasty highball as scarce as a Prussian plutocrat.

And so it goes. Paris has ceased to be a city of carnality and seduction. For the erotically curious, for the hunter of hedonism, for the painter-of-the-town there is nothing to be gleaned. For the uplifter there is no job. Avaunt, ye dispatchers of iniquity. Begone, ye expellers of impurity. Paris is purged of pruriency. Within its walls there lies no moping up for you.



Reassurance

By S. Michael

*NOW that we are very old,
Let us join hands
And walk together at night into a dark forest.
We need not speak, feeling each other. . . .
Now that we are very old.*



A WOMAN may love a man for a multitude of things: his hair, his bank-balance, his prestige, his courtliness, his bad habits, etc., etc. But a man never loves a woman but for one thing: her frailty.



A Kind Woman

By G. William Breck

THE woman was very, very, very kind to her husband. When he was ill she brought him soft cushions and hot soup and cold drinks and bitter medicine and warm blankets. When he was well she was just as kind as when he was sick. Her husband was a good, patient man and he loved his wife. But one day he hurt his foot and had to stay in bed many weeks. During this time his wife waited on him tirelessly. Scarcely a moment passed that she did not bring him something or suggest something for his comfort. Every five minutes she would ask him how he felt. Sometimes she would

vary this by asking him how he *didn't* feel. The wife had a friend who was a selfish, horrid woman. Because her friend's husband was handsome and amusing she came often to see him while his foot was healing. During these visits she never lifted a finger to help him nor did she try to hide her true nature. She never asked him how he felt. The man's wound finally healed. The first day that he was out of bed he cut up his kind wife into little pieces. These he put into a covered basket, which he buried in the garden. The next day he married the selfish woman.



AFTER twenty years a married man ought to know something about women—provided his wife isn't sharp.



GIVE a woman enough rope and eventually she will hang her head.



KISS—something which serves in lieu of an introduction.



OUT of sight, unfortunately, not always out of trouble.



Scene: New York. Time: *The Present.*

By George Jean Nathan

I

THE so-called biographical play vouchsafes more often than not less a biography of its central personage than a standard model melodrama laboriously hitched to that personage and given a deceptive air of authenticity by throwing back the scenery the appropriate number of years, causing the leading actor to deliver the most fetching *mots* of the illustrious deceased, and printing a bewildering note in the program to the effect that while certain liberties with history have been taken by the dramatist, the latter's aim has been not to record historical events exactly but to show the reaction of the central character to these events. Or, in other words, to draw an accurate metaphysical and psychological picture of the central character by showing how he would have conducted himself had these events been other than they actually were and had he then so conducted himself. The result we have long been familiar with. What confronts our vision is a "biographical" drama in which Disraeli is displayed as the hero of a Third Avenue melodrama with Madison Avenue furniture, whose famous East India policy apparently centres upon getting the ingénue happily married, in which Voltaire is exhibited as the hero of a Stanley J. Weyman red velvet and candleabra opus who devotes his life to changing from one Sulka dressing gown to another, making epigrams and saving the *jeune premier* from jail, and in which Mary Queen of Scots is shown as

the heroine of an old Mildred Holland historical tub-thumper with the tub hidden under a cretonne covering and the thumping muffled to a degree in counterfeit prosody. These gentle works are biographical plays very largely in the sense that "Shenandoah," with its amorous Sardoodledom interrupted by an actor in a blue suit astride a galloping nag, and "The White Feather," with the entire German navy bent upon blowing up a remote sea-coast house full of English actors, are historical plays. They are simply cheap fabrications of the showshop given a specious importance, in the instance of the so-called biographical plays, by naming the star actor Cromwell or Disraeli instead of Major-General Sir Montmorency Pinero or the Hon. Gilbert Prothero Sutro, M.P., and getting the orchestra to play the tunes of the period during the entr'actes or, in the second instance, by outfitting the Sardou characters with the uniforms of the army of the home nation, save Scarpia, who is dressed up as a captain in the army of the enemy (he is usually given heavily to drink and covets the home major's wife), by further injecting into the proceedings a rousing speech to the effect that the home nation is in the war business for Jesus' sake and not for mere gain, like the enemy, and by winding up the evening by sneaking the orchestra back stage to play the national anthem as the final curtain descends.

The biographical play, even where it is of a considerably higher level than those which we have been discussing,

is theatrically seldom satisfactory, and for a simple reason. It either presupposes a quite thorough acquaintance with its subject on the audience's part, which the audience does not possess and which hence makes a great deal of the play vague and unintelligible to the audience—or it presupposes no acquaintance at all, or at best very little, which contrives to present the central historical character to the audience's mind as a mere character in a conventionally fictitious play somewhat puzzlingly given to confounding what might ordinarily be a fictitious play—and a comprehensible one—by lugging in disturbing semi-recognizable allusions to persons and events in which the audience is not in the least interested. John Drinkwater, to a degree in his "Abraham Lincoln," and Sacha Guitry, now to an even greater degree in his "Pasteur," have got around the problem by abandoning the biographical drama part of the business to a very considerable extent and centering their attention upon the biography of the chief protagonist. They have wisely elected to show not Lincoln's and Pasteur's reactions to historical events so much as the reactions of these historical events to Lincoln and Pasteur. They have given us infinitely less a biography of the drama of these men's times, as their colleagues have done in their biographical plays, than a biography of the men themselves. These men they have illumined as if with staccato pocket-flashes, in a succession of sharp cut-outs, in a series of fleeting and momentary glimpses. The effect, in Guitry's play very much more than in Drinkwater's, is like a rapid turning of the leaves of an articulate album. It accomplishes by inference and suggestion all that the other biographical dramatists have failed to accomplish by elaborate meticulousness, a careful smoothing out of rough edges and \$30,000 worth of scenery, costumes and properties. It is thus, in the words of the estimable Major Owen Hatteras, D. S. O., that we achieve our fullest conception of a personage. "Biography

fails, like psychology," he has observed in his memorable work, "Pistols for Two," "because it so often mistakes complexity for illumination. Its aim is to present a complete picture of a man; its effect is usually to make an impenetrable mystery of him. The cause of this, it seems to me, lies in the fact that the biographer always tries to explain him utterly, to account for him in every detail, to give an unbroken coherence to all his acts and ideas. The result is a wax dummy, as smooth as glass, but as unalive as a dill pickle. It is by no such process of exhaustion that we get our notions of the people we really know. We see them, not as complete images, but as processions of flashing points. Their personalities, so to speak, are not revealed brilliantly and in the altogether, but as shy things that peep out, now and then, from inscrutable swathings, giving us a hint, a suggestion, a moment of understanding."

Guitry's "Pasteur" is by this token as thoroughly interesting a biographical play as the present-day stage has disclosed. It is intelligently planned and intelligently executed, and as vital a picture of a very great man as a modern dramatist has succeeded, within the confines of the proscenium, in composing. The translation of the French original by Arthur Hornblow, Jr., is excellent. So is the performance of the chief role by Henry Miller.

II

I AM the only man writing about the theatre and drama in America who has not at one time or another composed an article proving that Charlie Chaplin is a great artist. Chaplin is such an immensely amusing fellow that it has never occurred to me to stop and ponder the question whether he was a great artist or not a great artist, or even an artist at all. He has kept me laughing so much that I haven't had time. I doubt that Chaplin can possibly be an artist. There are so many admitted, unquestionable artists of comedy who

have tried to make me laugh and haven't succeeded that I have misgivings so far as this Charlie is concerned. He is too funny to be like these other artists. Either he isn't an artist or I am impervious to art.

Every time that some person like Chaplin comes along and does his job, whatever it is, supremely well, a lot of æsthetic Columbuses excitedly tumble down off the bleachers and frantically begin sticking up posters on the fences proclaiming him a great artist, "richly gifted with the vital commingling of humor and pathos," who would make a wonderful Hamlet. While these Columbuses of artistic genius hotly debate with one another the problem whether Cézanne, Remy de Gourmont, Dvůrák, James Joyce and ten or twenty others deserve to be rated as artists or merely clever tricksters—and fail to come to a conclusion—they never for a moment hesitate when it comes to someone like Charlie. And doubtless quite as much to the estimable Charlie's amusement as to the amusement of the rest of us who remain quietly and comfortably seated in the bleachers and who are content to be hugely entertained by a hugely entertaining fellow without feeling the necessity of sticking a label on him.

The word artist is the most loosely handled word in our language. In the old days, an artist was someone like Michelangelo or Shakespeare or Beethoven. Today, an artist is someone like D. W. Griffith, Johnny Weaver or Fannie Brice. There is some doubt about Richard Strauss, it would seem, but none at all about Joe Cook. So far as I can make out, the only person writing, painting, singing, composing, dancing, modeling, acting or juggling billiard balls in America in this day and hour who isn't unanimously conceded to be an artist by the jury of Columbuses is Theodore Dreiser. I have before me the latest copy of a well-known American periodical. Among the seventy-three persons who are hailed in its pages as distinguished artists I note the following: John Mur-

ray Anderson, Jess Sweetser, Gloria Foy, Harrison Fisher, Rollo Peters, Harold Lloyd, Paul Whiteman, Irene Castle, Walter Lippmann, the originator of the "Krazy Kat" cartoons, Will Rogers, Robert W. Chambers, Wetzell the tailor, Babe Ruth, the designer of the Chalmers Six, Sidney Howard the author of "Swords," Yvonne George, Jackie Coogan, Samuel Rzeschewski the infant chess player, the Rath Brothers, and H. C. Witwer. Poor Chaplin, clown extraordinary, a movie comedian of the first rank and a soul of brilliantly amusing antic, now becomes a mere great artist like these others. Such is the penalty of superb proficiency in a land of doodles.

Chaplin's latest picture, "The Pilgrim," while it does not show him at his best yet shows him sufficiently comical. His invention of "business" is especially noteworthy: in this he is matched by few if any persons on our stage or screen. The picture as a whole is crude stuff and often the ideas, very funny at bottom, are developed with little or no imagination, but for all that it provides at least a dozen healthy loud laughs. Being a low fellow and utterly devoid of all nicety of taste, my own chief admiration is reserved for the four episodes in which the leading protagonist is the M. Charlie's sit-spot. That particular episode wherein the said spot is jocosely warmed by a flickering candle I heartily commend to all persons as completely bourgeois and unrefined as myself. If it be true that Charlie Chaplin is a great artist, I must do my critical share in insisting that this sit-spot of his is an even greater one.

III

It does not take grisled old theatre-goers like our younger dramatic critics to recall the day—now some twelve or thirteen years back—when the town was set to an abashed and horrified whispering by William Hurlbut's employment of the word "rape" in his play "New York," then current at the old Bijou, and to an even more violent

and horrified indignation by Clyde Fitch's unheard of use of the oath "God damn you" in his play "The City," on view at the Lyric. A lot of liquor has flowed under the bridges since that time. Today such words and oaths are not only commonplaces in our popular theatre and pass unnoticed, but words and oaths thrice as salty make no more impression on an audience than common sense makes on a French deputy. "God damn you," appearing casually even in a little comedy like Buchanan's "The Sporting Thing To Do," pricks the audience's ear no whit more than the venerable "Go to hell" of a hundred and one yokel-yankers. "Bastard," reclaimed from Shakespeare and the Restoration dramatists, is as common on the present-day popular stage as bad acting. "Jesus Christ!" is sworn indiscriminately. "The Hairy Ape's" language, that bothers only a few meddlesome clergymen in Philadelphia and the other rural districts—a language that ten years ago would have made Dr. Brander Matthews blush to the roots of his whiskers—today hardly fetches a lift of the eyelid. And Sholom Asch's "The God of Vengeance," with an artillery of words that would bar even this church trade paper from the United States mails were they to be set down therein, while, true enough, it is being scrutinized at the time of writing by the Grand Jury, crowds the theatre to the doors and apparently doesn't shock any of the innumerable lay moralists in the audience save a stray member of the Drama League and a few old maids, and them pleasantly.

For all the talk of the current blue-nosed censorship and busybody reform, so vociferously denounced by our Franco-Chicagoans and their fellow Continentals of St. Louis, Akron, Pottstown and points East—I myself have shared in a goodly portion of the talk—one cannot but appreciate from the statistics that never before in the history of the American theatre, and in literature no less, has a greater laxity in expression been permitted, a greater freedom in theme vouchsafed. Cer-

tainly the records fail to support those who argue the contrary, and who cry against the confining and corrupting influence of the alleged outside regulation of the arts. What I say here is surely not to be mistaken for a defense of such regulation. I now, as ever in the past, visit a preeminently sour eye upon regulation and censorship save where they concern themselves with cheap and obvious commercial smut. But what I do defend is the current censorship and regulation from the sweeping charges that have wrongly and not a little idiotically been made against them. They have minded their business much better than their howlers-down appear to believe. Now and again, of course, some absurd old foggy arises to condemn a respectable piece of literature on the ground that his flapper daughter got dirty ideas while reading it; and now and again some kept vice agent seeks to earn his keep and some unsatisfied wife or disappointed society woman snoots out a second-hand sex or publicity thrill by sitting on a committee to pass upon allegedly lewd plays—but in general things have been allowed a commendably free rein.

If those who are loudest in disclaiming this contention will glance back, they will quickly see for themselves how unfounded is any other attitude. Take, specifically, the theatre. Is there alive in the United States today a single clergyman, a single vice rat, a single censor, however bigoted, who would even think of inveighing against the theme of such a play as "The Conquerors," as their brothers in moral arms inveighed twenty-five years ago? Or against such a scene as the at-the-time condemned one in "The Turtle" wherein a woman was supposed to be disrobing behind a screen? Or against such an episode as the girl removing her stockings in "Naughty Anthony," which twenty years ago was held highly indecent? Or against Olga Nethersole's celebrated long kiss and the staircase episode of "Sapho"? Or against the well-remembered Archie Gunn poster of Anna Held, that was put down as

obscene because it actually displayed the lady's bare hip? Yet all this was not so very long ago. Today such things attract not the slightest attention from the professional moralists or anyone else. Nor do things a thousandfold more ticklish. For one complaint against a line or two in "The Demi-Virgin," an out and out commercialization of bawdry, a score and more "Please Get Marrieds" with scenes that go as far as anything on the French boulevards are permitted to travel their comfortable way unmolested. And for one moral kick against a line and an episode in "The Rubicon," a score and more of "Ladies' Nights," and "Getting Gertie's Garters" with their smoking-car humors are allowed to go their virgin course. And meanwhile the British censors scissor to pieces any play that satirizes religion even in a way that to an American censor would seem extremely mild and inoffensive. And meanwhile the Austrian theatrical censors howl against Schnitzler's "Professor Bernhardi" which no American censor has so much as whispered against in its local appearance in book form. And meanwhile the Russian censors keep an ever alert eye to the political nature of plays, ready to pounce and strike in case a theme is not to their tastes and interests. And meanwhile the French, forgetting for the nonce their indignation over "La Garçonne," compel the management of the Grand Guignol to delete from the bill of the evening a gruesome melodramatic one act play that the American censors would not conceivably trouble themselves over for a moment . . . London balks at the tabooed word "bloody" in Shaw's "Pygmalion," and protests until it is red in the face. A word comparatively three times as shocking is shouted no less than four times in the American presentation of a dramatization of Sudermann's "Song of Songs" and doesn't so much as cause a flutter. "The Egotist" goes calmly along in New York with dialogue saucier than that which in Guitry's "Black and White" causes Paris to gasp.

"Patricide" flabbergasts Berlin where, I venture confidently to predict, it would only bore New York to blasé yawns. . .

To return to "The God of Vengeance." Indubitably the work of a dignified and honest dramatist, and surely written free from motives of mere box-office bumping, its much proclaimed virtues yet fail to impress themselves upon me. Its study of character, so widely praised, seems to me superficial, though I confess to a suspect judgment since the personages of the drama and their environment are not sufficiently familiar to me for accurate criticism on this point. (I allow myself to doubt that most of those who have praised the study of character are gifted with any clearer knowledge in this than I am.) The plot is, at bottom, possessed of no more artistic integrity than that of, say, George Scarborough's "The Lure": it is less out of life than out of the showshop. A high sincerity on the part of Asch, amounting at times to a passion, cloaks the whole with a deceptive air of integrity. The play has power undeniably, but the power derives less from dramatic art than from dramatic artifice. The central character, Yekel, is without shades; it is thrown into relief by a steady melodramatic white light. The study of the maquereau is actually inferior to Scarborough's study of the same type of individual in the play referred to, and in no wise to be compared with Mizner and Howard's masterly study in their ill-fated "Only Law," exhibited briefly some years ago in the then named Hackett Theatre. The mother and young daughter are lay figures. The play, in short, possesses all the interest and all the artistic bulk of a better-grade if consistently obvious melodrama. In its local presentation it is lifted above its content by the genuinely admirable performance, in the leading role, of Rudolph Schildkraut.

IV

It was while the actors' strike was on several years ago and during one

of the big benefit performances in the Lexington Theatre that I overheard a man seated near me observe to his companion, "This is what always happens when the actor tries it on his own. An actor without an experienced manager to guide him is nothing but a vaudeville performer." The animadversion, though a little too grim and a little too inclusive, is not without its dose of soundness, an impression once again heightened by the fifth and most recent disastrous attempt of the Actors' Equity Association to operate the Forty-Eighth Street Theatre free from the pernicious commercial influence of Belasco, Hopkins, Ames and other such devastators of American dramatic art. This latest enterprise of the actors was the production of a play by John Howard Lawson called "Roger Bloomer," an absurdly overreached and childishly thought out manuscript directed with a strict regard for the loss of every conceivable superficial theatrical value, acted—save in the matter of one role—by sorry incompetents, and staged as crudely as a Coney Island "Days of '49" spectacle. We have all of us seen talentless productions in our time, but I offer you this one, at least on the evening of its first revealment, as the king pin of many a season.

The Actors' Equity Association has several good arguments on its side in its fight with the managers, but these good arguments seem thus far to have eluded the Gladstones and Bismarcks who are guiding its destinies. In the place of these good arguments the poor actors who constitute the rank and file of the organization are being misled by a speciously convincing but intrinsically hollow ballyhooing into visions of a Second Coming, with attendant star dressing rooms for even the interpreters of maid and butler roles, with free drawing-rooms for every member of the cast on railroad jumps farther from New York than Stamford, Conn., with double salaries for the dull week before Easter (this also to include the Yiddish actors), and with a free weekly ball at the Hotel Astor. I privilege

myself to doubt, however, that even actors are so foolish as to delude themselves for long with such rosy nonsenses. What an actor, like any other man, wants is a comfortable job and not such vague metaphysical delicatessen. And what he also, like any other man, knows is that while a manager may sometimes be forced into giving him a job if a threatening union is behind him, the manager, like any other man, will resent the compulsion that has been visited upon him and will make the job infinitely less comfortable than it would otherwise be. There is ever the human equation that men cannot successfully monkey with: against it, principles, however sound, are as nothing. I can see little difference between forcing a manager to take a certain actor and forcing an actor to work for a certain manager. If it is fair to compel Winthrop Ames to hire, say, Mr. Effingham Pinto for the role of Henry VIII when he wishes to hire Mr. Henry Miller—simply because Mr. Pinto is a member of the union and Mr. Miller is not—it should be equally fair to compel a union actor to play the role of O. U. Kidd for the Minsky Brothers when he wishes to play Mercutio for Arthur Hopkins—simply because the Frères Minsky are in favor of the closed shop and Hopkins is not. The Equity's answer to all this is that it is concerned not with art but with business, not with drama but with contracts. The answer is not particularly convincing. The Equity's finger is poking around as much in one pie as in the other. For all its denials, its hope—now blasted through the dismal failure of the Forty-Eighth Street Theatre experiment—was to fight the managers with independent actors' theatres and independently produced drama. Had the Forty-Eighth Street enterprise succeeded, we should have seen a union theatre setting up shop in every other block. The actors' union has had its first lesson. If actors are going to try their hand at theatrical management, our theatrical managers may properly be expected to try their

hand at acting. And when the day comes that Mr. J. J. Shubert puts on white whiskers and begins spouting King Lear and Mr. Archie Selwyn puts on pink tights and a cute wig and begins acting Romeo, I shall haul down the blue bottle and begin a dinner with bichloride *hors d'œuvres*.

V

Miss Laurette Taylor continues to devote her talents to snide plays containing such leading roles as may vouchsafe to her an opportunity to exhibit her histrionic gifts at the expense of an audience's boredom. However uncritical it may be, I can never resist mildly disparaging talent that, by way of giving itself its little day in court, so takes obvious advantage of the cheap and easy paths of the theatre. Miss Taylor I have long admired as an actress, but my admiration is rapidly dwindling as ever it dwindles when a competent artist continues vaingloriously to buy his or her competence with a mess of pottage. Women like Ethel Barrymore and Margaret Anglin win our respect because they are not afraid of failure, because having something of the true artist in them, they are ready and eager to pose their talents against difficult dramatic tasks. Miss Taylor, on the other hand, elects to put up no fight. She produces herself in showy roles, not plays. These roles are isolated things; the plays that surround them mere mayonnaise dressing. Nothing fights against these roles; nothing tests them. No other character contains a breath of life. The philosophy, point of view and dialogue are so much meringue atop which her role, like a pretty cherry, safely and comfortably rests. She is often successful in these negligible roles. Theodore Roosevelt was successful as a Colonel against a dozen starved and miserable Spaniards at San Juan Hill. . . .

Miss Taylor's latest vehicle is a dramatization of a popular magazine

story, subsequently made into a movie, called "Humoresque." Fannie Hurst is the author. It is very seedy stuff indeed. It may or may not be worthy of note that the great acting of the Moscow Art company is not and has never been accomplished in such plays as "The Harp of Life," "The Wooing of Eve," "One Night in Rome," "The National Anthem," "Peg-o'-My-Heart," and "Humoresque."

VI

VERNEUIL'S genuinely comical farce, "Pour Avoir Adrienne," which I described in these pages a year or so ago, comes to us in a Gladys Unger adaptation, in the main obedient to the original, under the poor title, "The Love Habit." Where the average French farce is generally ruined in America by the adaptor, this one is ruined by the actors. Ill-advised casting on the part of Mr. Pemberton has converted what should be, and what might readily have been made, a delicately preposterous piece of amorous foolery into a heavy-footed Methodist spree. James Rennie, cast for the resolute hot lover who sets out to get the pretty Adrienne whether or no, plays the gay fellow of the boulevards with all the airy *esprit* of W. S. Hart. Miss Florence Eldridge catches the role of the pursued Adrienne very nicely in the beginning but soon thereafter permits herself as Florence Eldridge to become subconsciously offended by the immoral nature of Mr. Rennie's dramatic intentions and suffers a personal lady-like resentment, ill-concealed, to cast a pall over the farcical lady-like resentment that her role calls for. The spirit of the farce thus becomes touched with a malapropos dramatic Y.M.C.A. note which dissipates the entire intent. I should add, however, that I seem to stand alone in this opinion. My colleagues of the daily press have pronounced the actors to be extraordinarily proficient farceurs.



Nordic Blond Art

By H. L. Mencken

I

CONNOISSEURS of the Ku Klux, American Legion or Daughters of the Revolution movement in American criticism will recall with agreeable sentiments an article by Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, the estimable 100% novelist, entitled "The Alpine School of Fiction" and published in the instructive *Bookman* for March, 1922. The thesis of this monograph was that American fiction is going to pot because our current novelists, neglecting the dolichocephalic Nordic blonds who constitute the cream of our population, and of every truly Christian population, are devoting themselves almost wholly to depicting the ideals and agonies of the inferior herd. "In the large and increasing number of midwestern novels that have achieved so remarkable a notoriety," said Mrs. Atherton, "every character is a round-headed, brachycephalic Alpine." With what result? With the result that the degraded defects and delusions of these *Chandala* have spread upward to the higher strata, and American society is "losing its class pride, its aristocratic standard." Even those novelists who "may be of the best American stock . . . have been democratized and debased by their round-head environment."

I need not say, I hope, that these sentiments filled me with a certain elevated satisfaction. I am, as my customers are probably by this time aware, one who holds the basic democratic doctrine in considerable suspicion, and no admirer, surely, of concrete democrats. What is less widely advertised,

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perhaps, is the fact that I am personally a Nordic blond of the purest Teutoburger Wald or greyhound type, dolichocephalic, azure-eyed and without hair on my arms or legs. My cephalic index, as determined by the experts of the Department of Justice, is 72.3. I am entirely devoid of Alpine and Mediterranean blood, and, though a Southerner, of African blood. The last man who called me a Jew had to pay \$8,000 into court to get rid of my solicitor. Thus the theory of La Atherton gave me great delight—though some of her deductions from it, I confess, somewhat shook me. For example, her apparent notion that the Southern crackers, *i.e.*, the low caste whites who now run the South, are not Nordic blonds; they are actually the purest Nordic blonds, forgetting my own case for the moment, in America. Again, her failure to distinguish clearly between Alpines and Mediterraneans, two very distinct stocks. Yet again, her rather naïve acceptance of the anthropology of Prof. Dr. Madison Grant, a *savant* whose study of crania has always seemed to me to have some flavor of osteopathy, or even chiropractic, in it. Nevertheless, I was a good deal flattered by her general doctrine, and caused copies of her article to be sent privately to all of the principal Middle Western novelists, including Dreiser, Ben Hecht, Anderson, Miss Cather and Harold Bell Wright. . . .

Ah, that she had let well enough alone, content with this one brilliant and caressing venture into Sulgrave Foundation anthropology! But alas, alas, they never do! When Prof. Dr. Brander Matthews, his *Mayflower* blood

boiling in his arteries, composed his patriotic treatise upon Prof. Dr. Ludwig Lewisohn, proving beyond the peradventure of a doubt that Ludwig, being a low *Schnorrer* from the ghetto of Berlin, could not possibly get his teeth into American ideals, what did he do with the manuscript? Did he send it to the Iowa *Légionnaire*, the Boston *Transcript*, the *Congressional Record*, or some other such great organ of the Anglo-Saxon *Kultur*? Nay, he sent it to Mr. Ochs, an honest Jewish man, editor of the New York *Times*, and in the pages of that able *Tageblatt* for Potash and Perlmutter it got into type, greatly, I daresay, to their astonishment. Consider, again, the case of Prof. Dr. Sherman *de l'Académie Américaine*, that daring and gallant exponent of 200 proof Americanism. Sweating stupendously to read Theodore Dreiser and Carl Sandburg out of the national letters on Mendelian grounds, he also inadvertently read out Walt Whitman, who was partly Dutch, and Bret Harte, who was half Jew. Once more, there is Prof. Dr. Leonard Doughty, of the University of Texas, Grand Cyclops of the Sassenachs in the Confederacy. First denouncing all the viable authors of the Republic as "a horde of chancre-laden rats," and laying down the harsh axiom that not one of them "is a member of the white Northern race," he then fell into the almost incredible *faux pas* of choosing, as his horrible and only example, James Branch Cabell, an Anglo-Saxon of no less than 256 impeccable quarterings, and a Southerner so unequivocally white that beside him even an albino Texan appears like the late Bert Williams. Mrs. Atherton, I regret to say, yielded to a similar and perhaps even worse excess. Not content with doing critical execution upon all the other novelists of America for filling their books with brachycephalic Alpines, she sat herself down and undertook to show them, by example as well as by precept, how to make a novel of dolichocephalic Nordic blonds . . . This ambitious work now engages us.

II

I SHALL not bore you with a long recounting of the central intrigue, for it has been discussed at length in the newspapers, and is no doubt familiar to you already, at least in its outlines. A lady calling herself the Countess Josef Zattiany suddenly appears in New York and is at once the rage. Her beauty is of a rare and blooming sort; not to put too fine a point upon it, she is an aphrodisiac of the most devastating sort, and one glance at her is almost fatal. So powerful, indeed, is her appeal that even Lee Clavering, a superb example of the dolichocephalic Nordic and a man hitherto almost anæsthetic to women, instantly falls for her, as the saying is, and proposes to marry her without delay. This Clavering is not only extremely handsome, but a familiar figure in the most delicate and forbidding circles of the New York *noblesse* and a great literary artist to boot. His daily column of sardonic, world-weary comment in one of the intellectual daily papers of the town, for writing which he is paid \$15,000 a year, is the last thing in American criticism. If he praises a play, the ticket speculators rush to the nearest synagogue to give thanks to Jahveh; if he sniffs at a book, the author takes the first train back to Muscatine, Iowa; if he gets up in the middle of a prize-fight and stalks out with sneers, the manager shoots both pugs, and departs himself for Arabia to hide his shame and the gate receipts. Clavering is the male de Rambouillet of a private society of *illuminati*, the Sophisticates, which includes all the most brilliant minds of the nation, and at its daily meetings at a hotel in 44th street there is such talk as has not been heard on earth since the days of the Twelve Apostles. In brief, a sort of combination of Christopher Morley, Heywood Broun, Franklin P. Adams and Johnny Weaver, with overtones of Charles Hanson Towne, Frank Crowninshield, Nicholas Murray Butler and Mrs. Atherton herself. Nevertheless, this extremely wise guy

tumbles head over heels in love with the Countess Josef Zattiany. Thirty-six hours after he meets her he is following her about like a stockbroker trailing one of the colored girls in "Shuffle Along."

Unluckily, whispers are heard—at first only in the most exclusive circles. Who, in a word, is this so-called Countess Josef Zattiany? The question is debated in boudoirs and in clubs, to all of which, of course, Clavering has access. Everyone remembers a beauty of the last generation, Mary Ogden by name, who married one Zattiany, an Hungarian nabob, and disappeared into the wilds of Herzegovina. But this Mary, by now, would be at least 57 years old, and no one has heard of her for years: the Countess Zattiany on exhibition looks to be no more than 27. A daughter, perhaps? At once the records show that the original Countess Zattiany had no daughter in lawful wedlock. Well, then, perhaps, a surreptitious, extra-legal daughter? The theory is not implausible. Mary Ogden, once she got to Hungary, is known to have been a gay one. Hungary, moreover, is an immoral country, and full of loose Austrian barons and gypsy violinists. Clavering himself seems to incline to this explanation. It shocks him a bit, I daresay, for his Nordic blond prejudices are against profligacy, but he quickly decides to see it through. Legitimate or illegitimate, he will marry this gorgeous creature, and so cover her dubiousness with the cloak of his own genealogical impeccability and literary puissance.

Then comes the thunderbolt. Cornered by this great love, the Countess knocks him cold with the news that she is actually the Countess, *i.e.*, the original Mary Ogden. What! Even so. The story she tells is genuinely startling—a mixture of Pinero, Ibsen's "Ghosts," the *Dial* and the magazine section of the *New York Sunday American*. Her life in Mitteleuropa was one of incessant and often hectic loves—years of wild and exhausting passion. Then came the war, and with it the new ex-

haustion of the hospitals. She emerged a wreck—a woman of 55, but looking fully 130. . . . Well, let us cut it short. She went to the professor in Vienna, took his x-rays "on the portion of the body covering the ovaries" and was restored to youth in six months. Now she has the shrewd and fertile mind, the serpentine and gaudy sophistication of a woman of 75 or 80, and the resilient, beautiful body of a woman of, say 27. . . . Clavering is for calling up the rector at once, but she stays him. Such an alliance, after all, would be against nature, and perhaps even *contra bonos mores*. So she gives him the gate, and marries an old lover, Count Hohenhauer, who fortunately turns up toward the end of the third act. Clavering, with great dignity, bids her good-bye, at the same time wishing her well.

III

SUCH are the main outlines of this dolichocephalic tale. It gives me, I confess, a certain uneasiness. Obviously, the corruption of the Nordic blonds by the Alpine brachycephalates has gone a great deal further than I ever suspected; it has, indeed, apparently gone so far that the Nordics are now even worse than the *Chandala* who have dragged them down. Mary Ogden is as blond as John Farrar, editor of the *Bookman*, but nevertheless it is impossible to escape the fact that she is, in essence, a loose woman; in fact, she boasts openly that she has had a whole herd of lovers, and even admits shamelessly that she is glad of it, and hints that she went to the professor in order to take on some more. As for Lee Clavering, though he is depicted as a New York *Junker* and the very *Sheik ul Islam* of the Nordic *literati*, it must be confessed regretfully that he never shows the slightest sign, either in his purely literary conversation or in his social persiflage, of being much above the general intellectual level of a cockroach. Mrs. Atherton admits us to several of the most intimate soirees of the Sophisticates. Their notion of aristocratic relaxation seems to be to

play charades, hold spelling bees, pinch arms and drink cocktails at 10 P.M.—the precise sports, as everyone knows, that entertain the brachycephalic hinds of the Pennsylvania mining regions. The first time that I found Clavering drinking cocktails *after* dinner I thought I must have fallen upon a misprint. But in the next chapter he was doing it again. True enough, Clavering is not an absolutely unchallengeable Nordic; he belongs, in fact, to the “black Claverings,” and in him the purity of his anthropological inheritance from “the Bretwaldas, overlords of Britain,” is contaminated by a “resurgence of the ancient Briton.” But surely old Mr. Dinwiddie, his uncle, is a pure Nordic, and yet even Dinwiddie drinks cocktails after the liqueurs.

Worse, many of the minor characters of the story display an almost inconceivable indecency—more gross and lamentable, in fact, than that of Prof. Dr. Doughty’s “chancre-laden rats.” I point to two examples, the one being Mr. James Oglethorpe, one of the most blond and Nordic members of the New York *haut ton*, and the other being Miss Agnes Trevor, a maiden lady of the highest social eminence. Mr. Oglethorpe’s daughter, Janet, is in love with Clavering, and proceeds against him with all the furious concupiscence of a dolichocephalic servant girl pursuing an ash-man. One might fancy that Mr. Oglethorpe would be somewhat nettled by this, but he actually takes it very calmly. “Where girls used to be merely romantic,” he says to Clavering, “she’s romantic . . . plus sex-instinct rampant. At least that’s the way I size ’em up, and it’s logic. There’s no virginity of mind left, mauled as they must be and half-stewed all the time, and they’re wild to get rid of the other. But they’re too young yet to be promiscuous . . . and they want to fall in love and get him quick.” Clavering, alas, is not gentleman enough to sacrifice himself; even when Janet breaks into his chambers he resists her. The case of Miss Trevor is yet more appalling; I hesitate, in truth, to report her conversation

with Mme. Zattiany. The essence of it is that she has a fearful case of Freudian suppressions, and is eager to get rid of them at any cost. “I could have killed every man I’ve met,” she yells, out of “the dark vortex of her secret past,” “for asking nothing of *me*. It seems to me that I’ve thought of nothing else for twenty years . . . I wonder I haven’t gone mad. Some of us old maids do go mad. And no one knew until they raved what was the matter with them. When Hannah de Lacey lost her mind three years ago I heard one of the doctors tell Peter Vane that her talk was the most libidinous he had ever listened to.” Mme. Zattiany, unluckily, can’t help her. A woman of the widest imaginable amorous experience herself—“I am not going to tell you how many lovers I have had,” she says to Clavering when he asks her to marry him—, she is yet unable, it appears, to snare one for her poor friend. . . .

“Black Oxen” (*Liveright*) is the name of this earnest and astounding book. It runs to 346 pages of small print, and has been greatly praised by distinguished critics, including most of those mentioned in it. It has, as the first effort to break through the brachycephalic miasma which now enshrouds the national letters, a certain historical importance, and no doubt it will be put to effective use by patriotic professors of literature in the universities. As a Nordic blond, I am naturally eager to give it all the help I can. I do so herewith, and very cheerfully. It is better, in spots, than the novels of Harold Bell Wright; it is fully as good, in more than one place, as the works of Robert W. Chambers. But I’d be a thumping liar, and, what is more, a very transparent one, if I did not warn you that, in many ways, the brachycephalic work of Miss Willa Cather, and particularly her “My Antonia,” is appreciably superior.

IV

THE doctrine exposed in Upton Sinclair’s latest volume, “The Goose-Step”

(*Selbst-Verlag*), to wit, that the American universities, with precious few exceptions, are run by stock-jobbers and manned by intellectual prostitutes—this doctrine will certainly give no fillip of surprise to steady readers of these pages. I have, in fact, maintained it here and elsewhere since the early years of the present century, and to the support of it I have brought forward an immense mass of irrefragable facts and a powerful stream of eloquence. Nor have I engaged in this great moral enterprise *a cappella*. A great many other anarchists have devoted themselves to it with equal assiduity, including not a few reformed and conscience-stricken professors, and the net result is that the old assumption of the pedagogues' *bona fides* is now in decay throughout the Republic. In whole departments of human knowledge he has become suspect, as it were, *ex officio*. I nominate, for example, the departments of history and of what is commonly called "English language and literature." If a professor in the first field shows ordinary honesty, or, in the second field, ordinary sense, it is now regarded as a sort of marvel, and with sound reason. Barring four or five extraordinary men, no American professor of history has written anything worthy of common faith or credit since the year 1917; all the genuine history published in the United States since then has come from laymen, or from professors who have ceased to profess. And so in the domain of the national letters. The professors, with a few exceptions, are unanimously and furiously consecrated to vain attacks upon the literature that is in being. Either, like the paleozoic Beers, of Yale, they refuse to read it and deny that it exists, or, like the patriotic Matthews, of Columbia, they seek to put it down by launching Ku Klux anathemas upon it. The net result is that the professorial caste, as a whole, loses all its old dignity and influence. In universities large and small, East, West, North and South, the very sophomores rise in rebellion against the incompetence and imbecility of their preceptors, and in the news-

papers the professor slides down gradually to the level of a chiropractor, a press-agent, a Congressman or a movie actor.

Thus there is nothing new in the thesis of Dr. Sinclair's fat book, which deals, in brief, with the internal organization of the American universities, and their abject subjection to the money power, which is to say, to Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club concepts of truth, liberty and honor. But there is something new, and very refreshing, in the manner of it, for the learned author, for the first time, manages to tell a long and dramatic story without intruding his private grievances into it. Sinclair's worst weakness, next to his voracious appetite for Remedies that never cure, is his naïve and almost actorial vanity. As everyone knows, it botched "The Brass Check." So much of that book was given over to a humorless account of his own combats with yellow journals—which, in the main, did nothing worse to him than laugh at him when he was foolish—that he left untold a great deal that might have been said, and with perfect justice and accuracy, about the venality and swinishness of American newspapers. In "The Profits of Religion" he wobbled almost as badly; the subject, no doubt, was much too vast for a single volume; the Methodists and Baptists alone, with their endless crookedness, deserved a whole self. But in "The Goose-Step" he tells a straightforward story in a straightforward manner—simply, good-humoredly and convincingly. When he comes into the narrative himself, which is not often, he leaves off his customary martyr's chemise. There is no complaining, no pathos, no mouthing of platitude; it is a plain record of plain facts, with names and dates—a plain record of truly appalling cowardice, disingenuousness, abjectness, and degradation. Out of it two brilliant figures emerge: first, the typical American university president, a Jenkins to wealth, an ignominious waiter in ante-chambers and puller of wires, a politician, a fraud and a cad; and secondly, the typical

American professor, a puerile and pitiable slave.

Such are the bearers of the torch in the Republic. Such is the machinery and inner nature of the higher learning among us: Its aim, briefly stated, is almost indistinguishable from the aim of the Ku Klux Klan, the American Legion, the Kiwanis Club, and all other such agents of repression and standardization. The thing it combats most ardently is not ignorance, but free inquiry; it is devoted to forcing the whole youth of the land into one rigid mold. Its ideal product is a young man who is absolutely "correct" in all his ideas—a perfect reader for the *Literary Digest*, the *American Magazine*, and the editorial page of the *New York Times*. To achieve this end Big Business has endowed it with unprecedented liberality; there are single American universities with more invested wealth and more income than all the universities of Germany, France or England taken together. But in order to get that ocean of money, and to pay for the piles of pseudo-Gothic that now arise all over the land, scholarship in America has had to sacrifice free inquiry to the prejudices and private interests of its masters—the search for the truth has had to be subordinated to the safeguarding of railway bonds and electric light stocks. As Sinclair shows, there is scarcely a university in the United States, whether maintained out of the public funds or privately endowed, that is not run absolutely, in all departments, by precisely the same men who run the street railways, the banks, the rolling mills, the coal mines and the factories of the country—in brief, by men who have no more respect for scholarship than an ice-wagon driver has for beautiful letters. There is scarcely an American university or college in which the scholars who constitute it have any effective control over its general policies and enterprises, or even over the conduct of their own departments. In about every one there is some unspeakable stock-broker, or bank director, or railway looter who, if the spirit moved

him, would be perfectly free to hound a Huxley, a Karl Ludwig or a Jowett from the faculty, and even to prevent him getting a seemly berth elsewhere. It is not only possible; on a small scale it has been done, and not once, but scores and hundreds of times.

Sinclair is content to set forth the basic facts; his book, as it is, is very long; he neglects laboring all of the deductions and implications that flow from his thesis, some of them obvious enough. One of them is this: that the control of the universities by Babbitts and King Kleagles is making it increasingly difficult to induce intelligent and self-respecting young men to embrace the birchman's career, and that the personnel of the teaching staffs thus tends to decline in competence, steadily and sharply. This accounts, in a large measure, for the collapse of the old public influence of the scholar in America; he begins to be derided simply because he is no longer the dignified man that he once was. In certain departments, of no immediate interest to trustees and contributors, a certain show of freedom, of course, still prevails. What is taught in astronomy, or paleontology, or Greek cannot menace the nail manufacturer on the board, and so he does not issue any orders about it, nor does his agent, the university president. But what is taught in economics, or modern history, or sociology, or even literature involves a dealing with ideas that are apt to hit him where he lives, and so he keeps a wary eye upon those departments, and at the slightest show of heresy he takes measures to protect himself. It is in these regions, consequently, that conformity is most comfortable, and that professional character is most lamentably in decay. Even here, to be sure, a few stout-hearted survivors of an earlier day hold out, but they are surely not many, and they will have no successors. The professor of tomorrow, in all departments that have to do with life as men are now living it in the world, will either be a scholastic Harding or he will be out of a job. The screws are tightening every year.

In the past the Babbitts have contented themselves with farming out the management of their intellectual brothels to extra-plaint professors, but now they begin to turn to yet more reliable men: army officers, lame-duck politicians, and engineers. The time will come, no doubt, when the president of Columbia will be just as frankly a partner in J. P. Morgan & Company as the head of the Red Cross or the chief vestryman of Trinity Church.

How far will this debauching of education go? Will the universities sink eventually to the level of the public-schools of New York, or even to that of the public-schools of such barbarous states as Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi? Here education has been reduced to a bald device for multiplying Freemasons, Knights of Pythias and Kiwanians—in brief, ignoramuses and bounders. In the institutions of higher learning one may reasonably look for some resistance to the process, soon or late. I doubt, however, that it will come from the professors; they are already too much cowed and demoralized, as Sinclair shows abundantly. The American Association of University Professors, an organization formed to protect pedagogues against wanton attack by the Babbitts, numbers but 5,000 members; the remaining 195,000 American professors are either afraid to join, or already too much battered to want to. How far their degradation has gone was made visible during the late war, when all save an infinitesimal minority of them yielded to the most extravagant manias of the time and thousands gave astounding exhibitions of moronic sadism. The Neandertal qualities thus awakened are still visible in many directions; in the Southern states, I am informed by an exceptional professor, fully five-sixths of his colleagues are members of the Ku Klux Klan. It is hopeless to look for a *Freiheitskrieg* among such poor serfs. But the students remain, and in them lies some promise for the future. The American university student, in the past, has been a victim of the same process of levelling

that destroyed his teacher. He has been taught conformity, obedience, the social and intellectual goose-step; the ideal held before him has been the ideal of correctness. But that ideal, it must be plain, is not natural to youth. Youth is aspiring, rebellious, inquisitive, iconoclastic, a bit romantic. All over the country the fact is bursting through the chains of repression. In scores of far-flung colleges the students have begun to challenge their professors, often very harshly. After a while, they may begin to challenge the masters of their professors. Not all of them will do it, and not most of them. But it doesn't take a majority to make a rebellion; it takes only a few determined leaders and a sound cause.

V

Brief Notices

THE DRAMA IN TRANSITION, by Isaac Goldberg (*Stewart*)—Of books on the current drama there is no end, but two-thirds of them seem to be simply copies from earlier volumes. Not so, however, this tome of the enormously erudite Goldberg. He has gone to the original sources in all languages, and he presents an immense mass of new material. A mine for Drama League lecturers and provincial dramatic critics.

ENGLAND, by an Overseas Englishman (*Houghton*)—Melancholy dithyrambs upon the decay of England by a fond colonial. He hazards the interesting theory that Puritanism got into England from Scotland—that it was the first effect of the Scotch-Irish-Welsh invasion which he now deplors.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE MOVEMENT, by Albert Leon Guérard (*Boni*)—An account of the long effort to afflict humanity with Volapük, Esperanto and other such gibberishes, happily blown up by the war.

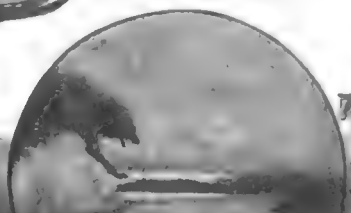
THE ART OF ROBERT WINTHROP CHANLER, by Ivan Narodny (*Helburn*)—A stately and superb folio, with many extremely effective reproductions, some in full color, of the decorations of one of the most original and interesting of American painters. A genuinely distinguished piece of book-making.

THE LETTERS OF AMBROSE BIERCE, edited by Bertha Clark Pope, with a memoir by George Sterling (*Book Club*)—The most important contribution to Bierciana made since Bierce's death. The letters are well selected, and Sterling's memoir and Mrs. Pope's introduction are very well turned out.



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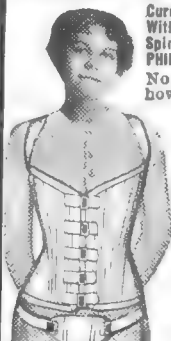
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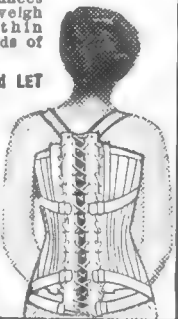
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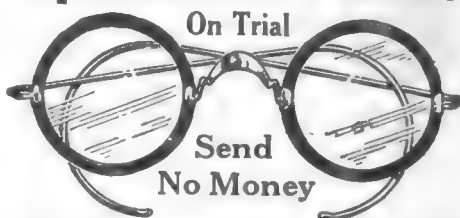
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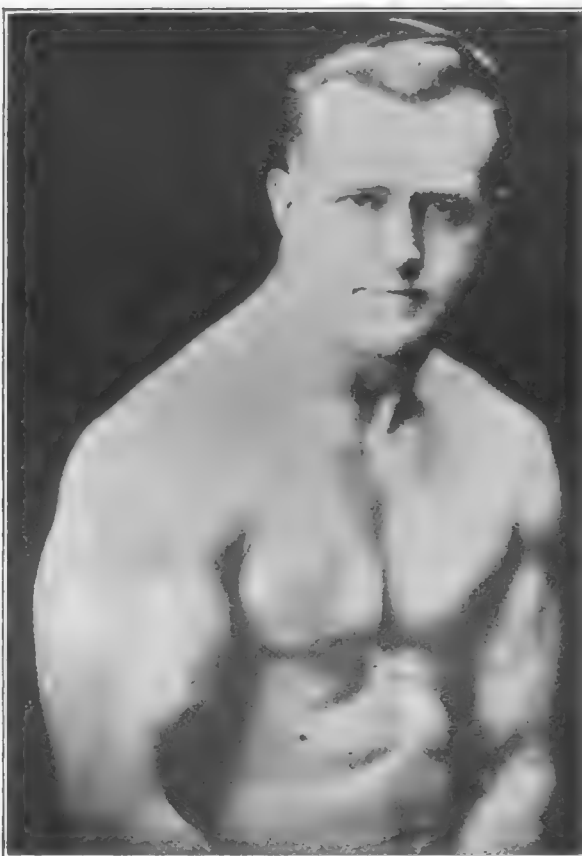
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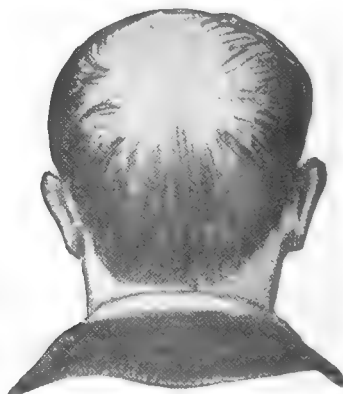
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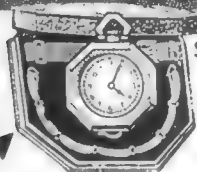
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Please send your patented Free Trial Outfit. X shows color of hair. Black..... dark brown..... medium brown..... Auburn (dark red)..... light brown..... light Auburn (light red)..... blonde.....

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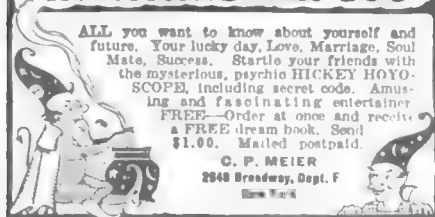
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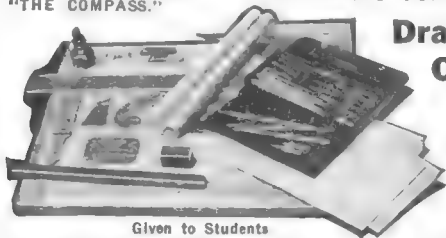
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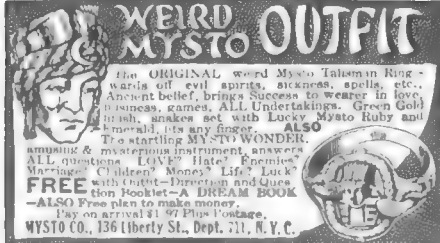
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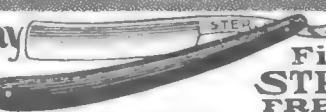
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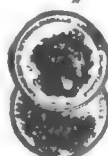
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What we offer you is NOT a shampooing preparation, not a dye, not a perfumed lotion—it is a compound with directions for aiding you to stimulate a renewed growth of healthy, silk-like, yet strong, and luxuriant hair.

KOTALKO is compounded from the Three Kingdoms of Nature and contains elements of great potency. It is becoming more widely known that hair roots are tenacious, that they are nourished in the scalp, that they do not fall out or pull out with the hair but that they remain alive, often for a long time, in the scalp.

We want you to try Kotalko on any bald spot or where hair is thin or weak, or where you have dandruff—and watch your mirror.

Get a full size box of **KOTALKO** at a drug store or obtain a free proof box by mail.

KOTALKO

If you have dandruff or if your hair has begun already to fall out, you cannot allow yourself to be squeamish by turning up your nose at an ointment on your scalp. True, you can buy various attractive liquids and creams for your scalp and hair—but if you have not found quick and full benefit, don't waste precious time. Try **KOTALKO**. Keep your scalp clear of dandruff with Kotalko. Preserve your hair in natural shade; try Kotalko. For a renewed growth of luxuriant hair, try Kotalko. It contains *genuine bear oil*, and other ingredients.

7,000 BOXES FREE!

These two portraits are from actual photographs of Mr. John H. Brittain, who had a large bald surface upon his head. He used the wonderful compound, now known as **KOTALKO**, in its improved form and a full growth of luxuriant hair was developed. Absolute proofs by affidavits and other data are on file. Many others have testified to similarly wonderful results with the



aid of **KOTALKO**. This is why the sale of **KOTALKO** is steadily increasing. Men and women recommend it to others because of wonderful benefit. Test for yourself. Get a box today!

Women of all ages are amazed at the marvelous power of **KOTALKO**—the true hair grower.

Men who were bald have had amazing results by using **KOTALKO**—the true hair grower. For children's hair it is unequalled. Full directions accompany each box.

KOTALKO OFFICES, BA-24, Station X, New York



From Photo of Mary Little

Lost All Her Hair

Several years ago I had lost all my hair. I was bald. My head was as bare and shiny as the outside of a milk bowl, and now at age of 36 I have hair like you see in the photo.

My scalp had been prescribed for by a doctor and I tried various things but no hair came. Then my hair was examined by a hair specialist who gave me a treatment but no hair could be made to grow.

One day I saw an advertisement of Kotalko and started using it. Lucky day for me. Soon I saw hairs starting to appear. I said nothing until a little later when others noticed how I was getting a new crop of hair.

The hair grew steadily, in nice natural shade and silk-like yet strong.

The photo is just as you asked, my hair being loose. It is well down over my shoulders now. If you had asked for a photo with my hair done up, it would look much nicer you know. Just imagine me, with a bald head, having to put on a wig! (Signed) MARY LITTLE.

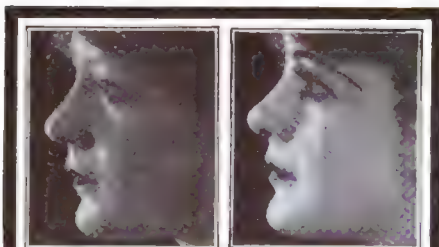
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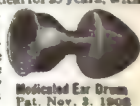
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The other nights of the week cleanse your skin thoroughly in the usual way with

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